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# MOTORSPORT NEWS

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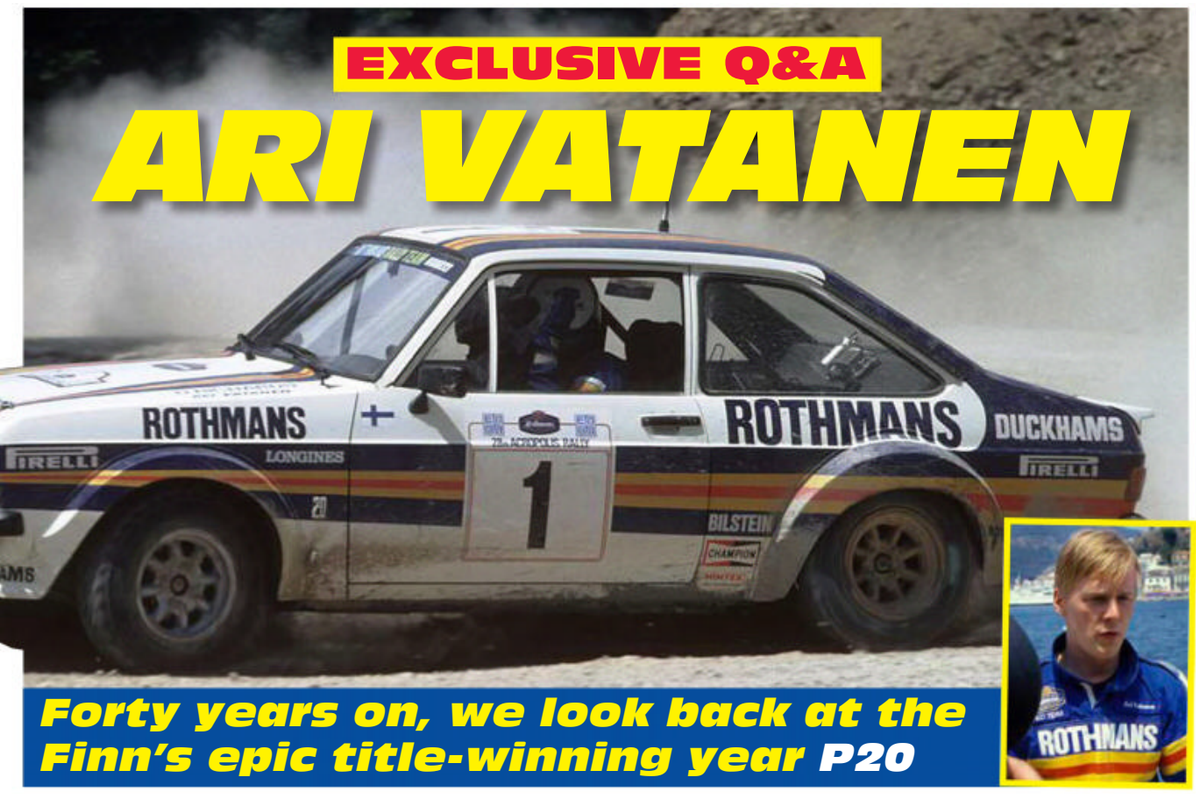


EXCLUSIVE Q&A

## ARI VATANEN

Forty years on, we look back at the Finn's epic title-winning year **P20**

*Lewis goes on the attack in troubled Brazilian GP weekend*

# HAMILTON MASTERCLASS REIGNITES F1 TITLE BATTLE

Hamilton performed a miracle in Interlagos

Hamilton fended off rival Verstappen

**By Matt James**

**Lewis Hamilton says winning the Brazilian Grand Prix on Sunday felt like his first victory in Formula 1 after an incredible fightback.**

The Mercedes man was kicked out of qualifying for an illegal rear wing and was forced to start the Sprint race from the very back of the grid. He copped another five-place penalty for an engine change and started the main race in 10th, but powered through and put a late pass on championship rival Max Verstappen to take an unlikely win.

The seven-time champion said: "These things that just kept going against us, but I think it shows for everyone, just never give up. Whatever you are facing you have just got to keep pushing, keep tumbling away and never, never stop fighting.

"It feels like the first [win] because I don't think I've had a win for a long time."

Hamilton is now trailing Verstappen by just 14 points in the hunt for the crown with three races remaining.

**Full report page 4**

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PREVIEW

## THE FIGHT TO BE CROWNED THE UK'S NUMBER ONE

*We look ahead to the British Rally showdown* **P18**

INSIGHT

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*Tracing the heritage of British GT series* **P28**

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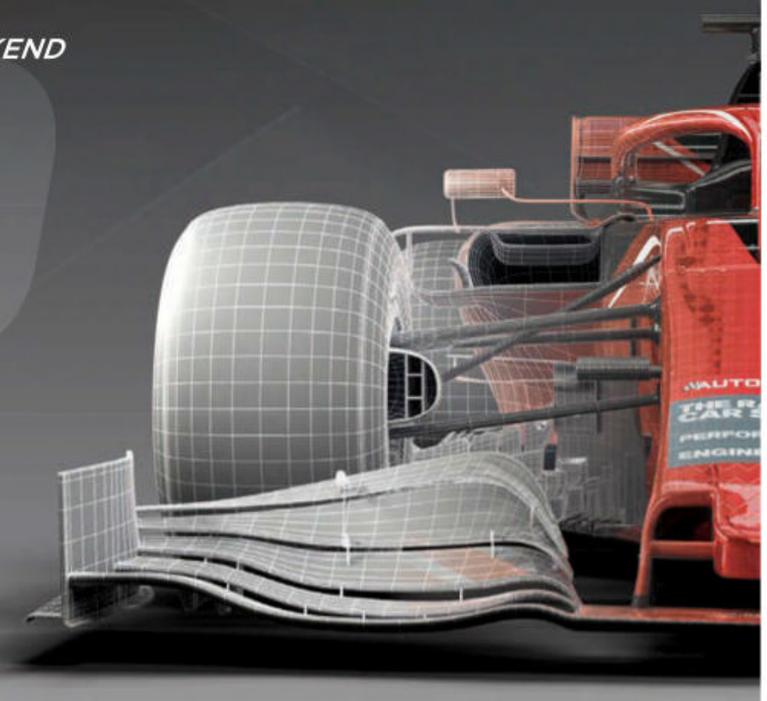

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# COMMENT

Photo: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey

Hamilton's performance at Interlagos was simply stunning – and against the odds

# A FIGHTER WHO NEVER GIVES UP

**Formula 1 and its fans had a lot to be thankful for in last weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix. For a few laps, it seemed like the victor would not be named until after deliberations in the stewards' room.**

Lewis Hamilton's attempt to overtake leader Max Verstappen at the fourth corner on lap 48 was unsuccessful as the Red Bull driver used all of the road on the exit of the downhill left-hander to run the Mercedes man off the road.

Still, Hamilton gathered his thoughts and his pace and came on strong again at his Dutch rival before sweeping ahead for good at the same corner on lap 59.

That was a huge relief, because what had been a sensational grand prix could have been ruined had the officials got involved. They had done plenty to spice up the Brazilian Grand Prix already with penalties for both Hamilton and Verstappen in the build up to the race and would have been looking forward to a quieter Sunday. Eventually, they got one.

Hamilton himself was buzzing after the race in an event that did have all the hallmarks of his hero Ayrton Senna. It has also breathed life back into the championship battle, which could have faded away should Red Bull have prevailed at Interlagos. But it was saved by a Lewis masterclass despite all that was thrown at him.

In this issue, we also look ahead to that will be another two-way title thriller, this time in the British Rally Championship on the Ulster Rally. Osian Pryce and Matt Edwards will go head-to-head in what is, after dropped scores have been taken into account, effectively a winner-takes-all showdown. May the best man win.

The World Rally Championship will also reach its climax this weekend in Italy. Elfyn Evans has a very long shot at claiming a maiden title as he will have to outperform serial winner Sebastien Ogier as the Frenchman looks to bow out of a full-time ride in the top flight on a high.

Our preview for the Roger Albert Clark Rally is also printed this week. While the event might yet be a week away, the bobble hats will be packed and the Thermos flasks will be filled already as fans will trek into the forests by the time next week's newspaper comes out. As you can read from Paul Lawrence, it is an event not to be missed.

Nick Garton looks at the environmental issues facing rallying while David Addison strolls down memory lane and traces the development of the British GT championship, one of the most popular series in the UK. The junior level single-seater category GB3 is also going to be popular in 2022, and Graham Keilloh gives us the lowdown on the reworked category on page 32.

**Matt James**
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MOTORSPORT NEWS

ISSUE MJ3309 NOVEMBER 18 2021

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The 1981 World Rally champion is on fine story-telling form

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## World Rally's finales that failed to fizz

Ahead of this weekend's final round in Monza, we look at some of the more sedate title victories

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How UK rallying needs to protect its future

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# FORMULA 1 REPORT: BRAZIL

Photos: Motorsport Images

Going toe-to-toe: Max fends off Hamilton

Best of rivals there is now only 14 points between Lewis and Max

# HAMILTON STUNS FOR HIS 'HARDEST' F1 VICTORY

## Magical drive by the Merc man lands triumph. By James Roberts

A cute pitstop strategy helped Bottas to third spot

Norris and Sainz got together away from the startline

**Like the greatest champions in all of sport, Lewis Hamilton is at his strongest when the chips are down. After being thrown out of qualifying, Hamilton delivered a performance inspired by Ayrton Senna that will be ranked as one of the finest of his career.**

In a weekend that was heated by political controversies between Red Bull and Mercedes both on and off the track, he hunted down Max Verstappen – and despite running off the road at one stage with his arch rival – managed to overtake the Dutchman for a stunning victory. When on Saturday it looked as if the World championship was slipping away, his 101st win has pushed the title fight wide open.

After a worrying amount of degradation, Mercedes decided to fit Hamilton with a new power unit for the Brazilian race, as it felt a five-place grid penalty could be overcome at a track where overtaking is possible. But they didn't bet on a 20-place penalty…

After achieving the fastest lap in qualifying on Friday afternoon, Hamilton's weekend started to unravel when the stewards found fault with his rear wing. After a number of tests, the FIA discovered the DRS gap on his Mercedes was found to exceed the permitted 85mm on the outer section of the wing.

The FIA tested it again on Saturday morning and although its verdict conceded that something had "gone wrong" either by a fault with the mechanism or an "incorrect assembly of parts" it decided to disqualify Hamilton from qualifying.

But to add to the drama, fan footage was captured that showed Verstappen touching the rear wing of Hamilton's car after qualifying in parc ferme. The FIA deemed that Max had touched the wing either side of the DRS actuation device but decided there was "insignificant force" which resulted in "no direct harm" to the wing. The stewards handed the Dutchman a €50,000 fine but he kept his position on pole for the Sprint race on Saturday afternoon.

Starting 20th, Hamilton was on a mission in the dash that set the starting grid for the main event. Lap after lap, he utilised the power offered by his new engine (and DRS) to climb through the field. In 24 laps, he'd brilliantly clawed his way to fifth place.

With the engine penalty, he started Sunday's race in 10th. Once again, he avoided trouble to quickly make progress and was sixth by the start of the second lap. Ahead of him Verstappen passed poleman Valtteri Bottas at the start at Turn 1 and after the Finn ran wide at Turn 4 that allowed Sergio Perez into second for a Red Bull 1-2.

Off the start, Lando Norris had suffered a left-rear puncture when he hit Carlos Sainz's Ferrari and he sunk to the tail of the field. Two laps later Japan's Yuki Tsunoda collided with Lance Stroll at the first corner, which broke the front wing off the AlphaTauri. The debris on the track led to the emergence of the safety car on lap five. Incredibly Hamilton was already up to P3 by this stage and starting to challenge Perez for second.

On lap 18 he passed the Mexican into the Senna 'S' although Perez nipped back ahead going into Turn 4. Once he'd dispatched the Red Bull the following lap, he was 3.7 seconds behind Verstappen and started his charge on his title rival.

Race control activated a VSC on lap 30 when more debris fell off Stroll's Aston so Mercedes took the opportunity to pit Bottas and he leapfrogged Perez for third.

On lap 44 Hamilton made his second stop, three laps after Verstappen, and began to close down the 2.6s gap. On lap 48, the Mercedes went to the outside of the Reta Oposta to pass Verstappen into Turn 4 but the Red Bull man braked later and the pair of them ran wide off the track. The incident was noted by the stewards, but no action was taken.

On lap 59, Hamilton tried another attempt – this time on the inside – and made the move stick to hold the position and take the lead to the delirious delight of the crowd. Channelling the spirit of his hero Senna, to fight back in the face of adversity, this was an extraordinary performance from the seven-time World champion. He described the win as arguably the "hardest" of his career adding: "Things just kept going against us, but we had to keep pushing and never stop fighting."

## F1 RESULTS

**BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX**
**Laps: 71 Track: Interlagos**

| | DRIVER | TEAM/CAR | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lewis Hamilton | Mercedes | 1h32m22.851s |
| 2 | Max Verstappen | Red Bull-Honda | +10.496s |
| 3 | Valtteri Bottas | Mercedes | +13.576s |
| 4 | Sergio Perez | Red Bull-Honda | +39.940s |
| 5 | Charles Leclerc | Ferrari | +49.517s |
| 6 | Carlos Sainz | Ferrari | +51.820s |
| 7 | Pierre Gasly | AlphaTauri-Honda | -1 lap |
| 8 | Esteban Ocon | Alpine-Renault | -1 lap |
| 9 | Fernando Alonso | Alpine-Renault | -1 lap |
| 10 | Lando Norris | McLaren-Mercedes | -1 lap |

11 Sebastian Vettel (Aston Martin-Mercedes) -1 lap; 12 Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 13 George Russell (Williams-Mercedes) -1 lap; 14 Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) -1 lap; 15 Yuki Tsunoda (AlphaTauri-Honda) -1 lap; 16 Nicholas Latifi (Williams-Mercedes) -1 lap; 17 Nikita Mazepin (Haas-Ferrari) -2 laps; 18 Mick Schumacher (Haas-Ferrari) -2 laps; 19 Daniel Ricciardo (McLaren-Mercedes) 49 laps/chassis; 20 Lance Stroll (Aston Martin-Mercedes) 47 laps/accident damage **Drivers' championship:** 1 Verstappen 332.5 points; 2 Hamilton 318.5; 3 Bottas 203; 4 Perez 178; 5 Norris 151; 6 Leclerc 148 **Constructors' championship:** 1 Mercedes 521.5 points; 2 Red Bull 510.5; 3 Ferrari 287.5; 4 McLaren 256; 5 Alpine 112; 6 AlphaTauri 112.

Charles Leclerc was once again the best of the 'rest'…

## Lewis strapped for cash after enjoying his Brazilian success

Brazilian Grand Prix winner Lewis Hamilton was handed a €5000 fine by the stewards in Brazil after he undid his seat-belts on the cool-down lap.

After his superb victory, Hamilton slowed to pick-up a Brazilian flag from a marshal and uncoupled his safety belt, thereby contravening the FIA's international sporting code.

The stewards gave seven-time champion Hamilton the fine and an additional €20,000 penalty, which is suspended until the end of 2022.

They cited that Formula 1 should set an example for junior drivers adding that young racers must "learn the importance of using all the safety devices of the car at all times."

A statement from the FIA stewards added: "While the stewards are sympathetic to the desire to celebrate, it is fundamentally unsafe to undo seatbelts while the car is in motion. Slow speeds in these cars are very fast for an unstrained occupant."

## Horner says Red Bull must work to understand Mercedes speed

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner has described second place for Max Verstappen in Brazil as "damage limitation" as the title fight narrowed to 14 points.

Red Bull called fourth-placed Sergio Perez into the pits on the penultimate lap to fit fresh tyres and enable the Mexican to snatch the fastest lap point away from Hamilton. "Their car was very quick here, they had a fresh engine which was very powerful – they had very fast straightline speed with Monaco levels of downforce so we need to understand that," said Horner. "But there are three races to go and everything to play for. We've just got to concentrate on our own job and push them as hard as we can."

Formula 1 heads to Qatar for the first-ever time this coming weekend, with the new Jeddah Corniche Circuit hosting Saudi Arabia's inaugural race a fortnight later.

# RACING NEWS

# MERCEDES BOSS FUMES AFTER BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX FLASHPOINT GOES UNSANCTIONED

## Wolff furious as the officials turn a blind eye to close call between Lewis and Max

Photo: Motorsport Images

Flashpoint: Lewis and Verstappen

By Matt James

**Mercedes boss Toto Wolff has slammed race officials as "laughable" for their decision not to penalise Max Verstappen after the Dutchman ran title rival Lewis Hamilton off the road in the Brazilian Grand Prix.**

The incident came on lap 48 when Hamilton tried to go around the outside of Verstappen's Red Bull at the fourth corner of the lap. Hamilton was alongside his rival but Verstappen ran wide on the exit, which forced the Mercedes man onto the run-off area.

Hamilton regained the circuit and eventually overtook Verstappen for good at the same corner before going on to win.

Wolff said the incident was a "really wrong defence from Max". He added: "Lewis just managed it even more brilliantly by avoiding the contact and ending the race that way. But that was just over the line. It should have been a five-second penalty at least. Probably Max knew that. But just brushing it under the carpet it's just the tip of the iceberg. It's laughable.

"If the rules say that's on, that's fine," Wolff continued. "I am not discussing the principle of hard racing. Hard racing is super and should be on. But not when it has been clarified before that you can't drive someone off the track."

Verstappen defended the move and said that he was already suffering from a lack of grip when Hamilton attempted his first overtake.

Verstappen said: "We both of course tried to be ahead into the corner so I braked a bit later to try to keep the position and the tyres were already a bit worn so I was already on the edge of grip. I was already not fully on the apex so then it's a safer way of just running a bit wide there. So in a way I was of course happy that the stewards decided that we could just keep on racing because I think the racing in general was really good."

Glickenhaus for the WEC

## GLICKENHAUS PLOTS RACE RETURN NEXT SEASON

Glickenhaus will run a single car for every round of the World Endurance Championship in 2022.

The firm had been told by rulemakers that it needed to enter at least one car in the entire competition to be allowed to compete at all in 2022, and the American team has committed to that as a minimum requirement.

The squad could expand to more machines for races later on in the season and is expected to make a multi-car entry at Le Mans in June.

Team boss Jim Glickenhaus said: "We will start with one car at Sebring and Spa, then two at Le Mans, and then we will see how many cars we are able to race after that.

"There is an intent to do the remainder of the year after Le Mans; the only caveat is that we have to get a fair Balance of Performance."

The team has yet to confirm its full driver line-up for 2022, but Glickenhaus said Olivier Pla will be in its solo car for the season-opening Sebring 1000 Miles in March and that Pipo Derani will rejoin the squad for Le Mans.

## BRITON YELLOLY TO SAMPLE ASTON MARTIN IN ROOKIE TEST

British driver Nick Yelloly will take part in the Formula 1 rookie test at Abu Dhabi at the end of the season.

The 30-year-old, a regular GT racer for BMW, has undertaken a lot of simulator work for the Silverstone-based team and will correlate his findings with the run in the F1 car, which has been driven this year by Sebastian Vettel and Lance Stroll.

The one-day test will be for rookies only in 2021 cars and will run alongside a two-day test for test and race drivers as they get to grips with the new 18-inch Pirelli tyres, which will be introduced in 2022.

Aston team principal Otmar Szafnauer said: "Nick is a really good guy and he's been with us quite some time. [He] helps to develop the simulator itself, more so than the car. We always to try to get the software and the hardware of the simulator working a bit better.

"And to be able to do a really good job you need to in your mind be able to correlate what you're feeling in a simulation to a real car."

Yelloly will be in an Aston

## BOURNEMOUTH TO BID FOR FORMULA E ROUND IN THE STREETS

The Dorset town of Bournemouth has launched a bid to host a Formula E race, with an initial race hoped for in 2023

The Wessex Entrepreneurs group has tabled a bid for the race on the streets of the town and using the seafront as part of the circuit. In an article in the Bournemouth Echo, prime mover Tony Williams outlined the plan. "We are selling it as a British Monaco," he said.

"The only way you can protect jobs is to have a vibrant local economy, which is where the eGrand Prix focuses itself.

"The eGrand Prix is the thing that opens the door to a world that Dorset needs to be in and be active in.

"The county has been in decline for the last few years. We are trying to make the quantum leap back, using Bournemouth as the gateway and Formula E as the flag to wave to the world."

Formula E for Dorset?

## YOUNG HOPES GET BTCC TEST RUN

**Goodyear, the tyre supplier of the British Touring Car Championship, gave a quartet of champions from Goodyear-supported national series an opportunity to test one of the BTCC grid's Motorbase Performance-run Ford Focus STs last week. The 2021 TCR UK champion Lewis Kent, 2020 Focus Cup titlist Andy Godfrey and Mini Challenge winner Dan Zelos all got a run at Snetterton. Fiesta championship runner-up Luke Pinder also tested the machine.**

## CORVETTE COMMITS TO WORLD ENDURANCE SEASON

Chevrolet Corvette will contest the full World Endurance Championship for the first time in 2022 alongside a campaign in the IMSA Sportscar Championship in the USA.

The American brand has confirmed that it will run a C8.R model in the GT Pro division of WEC and that Briton Nick Tandy will drive the car alongside Tommy Milner. In the USA, Antonio Garcia and Jordan Taylor will be at the controls.

The crews will be joined by Alexander Sims and Nicky Catsburg for the longer races which require more drivers.

Jim Campbell, vice president of performance and motorsport at Chevrolet, said: "This is the most ambitious schedule that Corvette Racing has faced in its nearly 25 years of competition. It will be an honour to race in both the IMSA and WEC series at some of the best tracks in the world."

Tandy added: "I'm especially looking forward to taking this Corvette to tracks and events where we haven't raced the car before. To run the C8.R in six and eight-hour events that WEC runs is something still a little unknown to us at Corvette Racing."

Corvette has entered sporadic rounds of the WEC in recent seasons but has been a mainstay at Le Mans every season since 2000, apart from 2020.

Tandy will headline the Corvette challenge in sportscars

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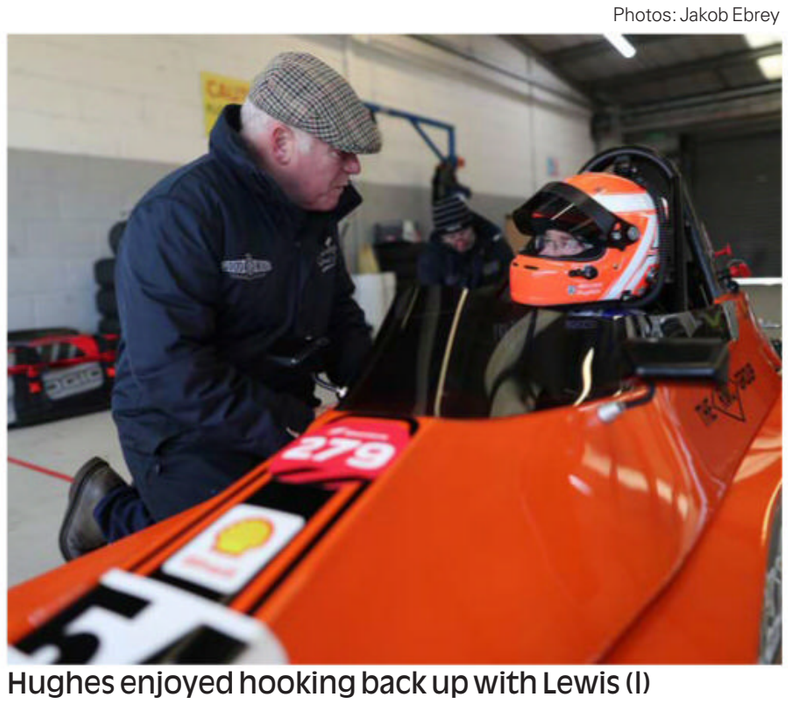
# RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

F3 champion Burt had only a brief outing in the RF80




Hughes enjoyed hooking back up with Lewis (l)

## HUGHES AND BURT HAVE MIXED FORTUNES AT THE HAYES

### Walter Hayes Trophy's star turns have varying fortunes in their historic Formula Ford machines

By Graham Keilloh

**Kelvin Burt and Warren Hughes had mixed fortunes as the star attractions returning to Formula Ford competition at the end-of-year Walter Hayes Trophy 10 days ago.**

After Roberto Moreno raced Jonathan Lewis's Van Diemen RF80 at the Formula Ford Festival, British Formula 3 champion Burt took over for Silverstone a week on. And Burt was joined by fellow former Lewis Formula Ford racer Hughes who at Silverstone drove Lewis's Royale RP26 formerly raced by Kenny Acheson, who attended the event on Saturday.

After overall event qualifying Burt and Hughes concentrated on the Pre-'82 Carl Hamer Trophy. Burt then only completed two pre-final laps after sustaining damage while Hughes finished fifth in the final.

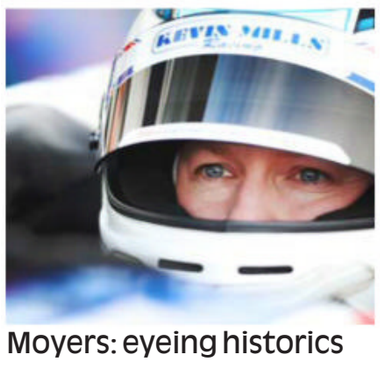
Burt told Motorsport News: "We're just too slow in a straight line. There's all kinds of people driving past me on the straight who then can't drive the corners, literally.

"It's a pity, you can see how nicely the car's prepared. We need to go and find us a better engine and maybe come back next time.

"I went into Brooklands three-abreast, a car spun in front of us and I couldn't really go left or right. I bent the radiator and it was quite a whack. I thought it's not worth cooking the engine so I brought it in. [Jonathan's] the same person, full of craic, that bit's been good fun."

Hughes told MN: "I thought the event was mega, that race [the final] was the most fun I've had in ages, racing with Rick Morris having a dice all the way through.

"The car didn't turn a wheel before Wednesday. The team have done a beautiful job."



Moyers: eyeing historics

## HAYES WINNER MOYERS AIMS FOR HISTORICS SWITCH

Two-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Michael Moyers is looking to switch to historic racing after recently fighting for victory in Formula Ford's two end-of-year showpiece events.

Kevin Mills Racing's Moyers recently made his Brands Hatch Festival debut where he ran competitively before an off in the final. Then in the Hayes Moyers won his heat and semi-final but lost victory chance with a collision with Rory Smith in the final.

"It's the right time to move on to something else," Moyers told Motorsport News. "[It's] 100% historic racing without a doubt. I'd love in a couple of years' time to be in a historic F1 car at The Classic or something like that. But that's now something we can work on. It'll just be a case of working our way up through the formulas.

"The [historic] racing's incredibly competitive still but there's definitely more respect. Just because I think the cars are more valuable. My [fabrication] business does a lot of work for the historic scene, so it does make sense. I'm a competitive person, I want to go into historic racing and win.

"The Festival and the Hayes it will always be an incredible event, so even if I'm not racing I'll be there spectating."

## FORES FAST BUT FRUSTRATED IN LAST-MINUTE HAYES RUN

Clubman turned GB3 racer Alex Fores made a surprise last-minute appearance in the recent Walter Hayes Trophy racing a Jamun M92 and showed good pace but hit repeated misfortune.

Fores, who finished second in last month's GB3 Donington Park season closer, at 2020's Hayes finished runner-up in the Carl Hamer Trophy for pre-'82 Formula Fords driving Richard Tarling's Van Diemen RF80. This year Fores raced Tarling's Jamun and finished 10th in his overall event heat, though was set back in the Janet Cesar Trophy for pre-'93 cars by contact in its pre-final.

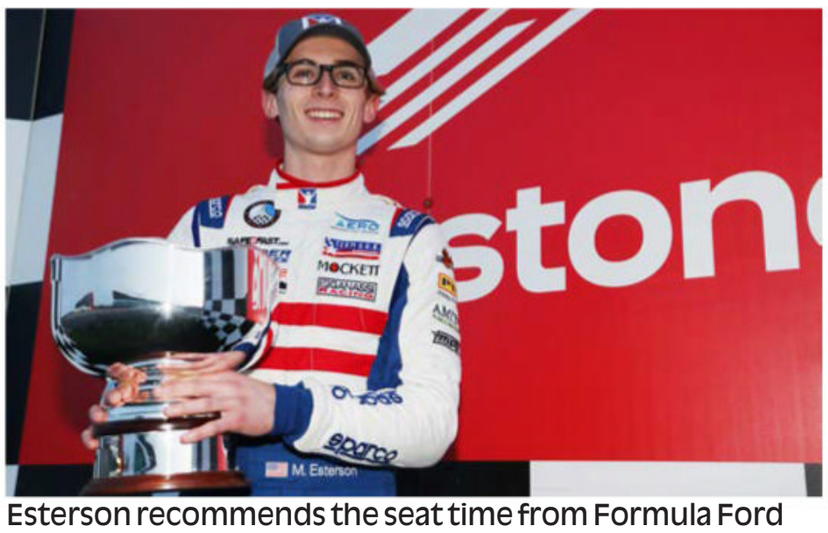
Then on Sunday he first retired from his overall semi-final with mysterious oversteer then parked in the Janet Cesar final as his exhaust bolts were loose.

Fores told Motorsport News: "The champion [Cam Jackson], we had the same pace as him in our qualifying and first heat. So our pace was always there, right from the start from a car that's not been out in two years.

"It was good fun with no aero, close racing, that's what I loved last year and what brought me back this year. See what we can do to back get out next year.

"We only actually got the funding to be able to race on Thursday night, so just tested hopefully racing. Even the test was only planned a couple of days before."

Fores was on Cam Jackson's pace but hit ill luck




Esterson recommends the seat time from Formula Ford

## ESTERSON SAYS "NO BETTER OPTION" THAN FF1600 FOR YOUNG RACERS

Walter Hayes Trophy winner Max Esterson has said there is no better option for aspiring young drivers than Formula Ford and added that his desired 2022 GB3 move is "close".

The 19-year-old Team USA Scholarship competitor, who also a week prior to the Hayes finished second in the Formula Ford Festival having started the final 13th, completed a full National Formula Ford championship season this year with Low Dempsey Racing and finished third in the standings.

The American wants to move to GB3 next year and completed his latest GB3 test with Douglas Motorsport earlier this month (see MN, November 11).

Esterson told Motorsport News: "I don't think there's a better option honestly for any young racer, I couldn't have imagined learning this much. I've done close to 70 days in the car since April, really it's not possible anywhere else. It's just the best training ground.

"[GB3 is] still the hope [for 2022], we'll see what happens, I think we're close. It's definitely a lot different to this [FF1600] but a lot of skills do transfer over. It's definitely good training."

## GILKES WANTS ANOTHER W SERIES GO

Megan Gilkes is seeking a second shot at the W Series next year following her full season of UK Formula Ford competition in 2021.

The 21-year-old Canadian competed in W Series' 2019 inaugural season, and won its special non-championship reversed-grid race at Assen, but felt she generally didn't do herself justice due to illness.

Gilkes told Motorsport News: "The level of competition over here is immense, there's people from all over the world coming to race in British Formula Ford. I've had a good season with some good results especially at the end of the year.

"I am looking into the W Series to see if I can get an invite back to a selection event for that. I have some unfinished business there. When I wasn't feeling at my best in the series it was really difficult to get the maximum out of the cars. If I got another go I can really show them what I've got."

Gilkes feels better equipped now for W Series shot

# SILVERSTONE SET FOR PROTOTYPE BONANZA WITH SERIES COLLABORATION

## Zeo Prototype Series and Sports Prototype Cup are to provide a high-performance sportscar blue-riband double-header on Silverstone's GP circuit next June

Photos: James Roberts, Revolution, Carlin, Ginetta, MotorSportVision,

The Zeo Prototype contest made its debut this year

The Sports Prototype Cup has supported F1 twice

By Graham Keilloh

**The Zeo Prototype Series and Sports Prototype Cup are collaborating to create a blue-riband event next June with a potential bumper 40-plus high-performance sportscars on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit.**

The Zeo Prototype Series was launched this year with three race meetings for the multi-class high-speed contest. It attracted 19 cars to its most recent round, at Donington Park in September.

Now it is set for its Silverstone GP circuit debut with this double-header collaboration event, on June 19, to be the showpiece on its four-round UK-based 2022 calendar.

The Sports Prototype Cup, featuring the Revolution A-One and Radical SR3 Trophy classes, started its first full season in August 2020 and has since twice supported Formula 1 meetings. It will line up at Silverstone as part of its 10-round 2022 schedule that also includes visits to four other grand prix circuits at Zandvoort, Spa, Barcelona and Paul Ricard.

Zeo Prototype Series coordinator Grace Williams said: "This collaboration allows us to target a grid of over 40 cars, which would be the biggest and most varied grid of prototypes seen on Silverstone GP for a while. These high-downforce cars suit the fast-and-flowing Silverstone circuit and promises fans and drivers a spectacular pair of races."

Sports Prototype Cup coordinator James Bailey added: "Every one of our 2022 races will be on a current European F1 circuit. The Zeo team has done a brilliant job in reigniting interest in UK prototype racing and we're thrilled to be bringing two of our classes to their flagship event."

Ginetta Junior pacesetter Voisin joins frontrunner Carlin's line-up

## TEENAGE STAR VOISIN BECOMES CARLIN'S FIRST 2022 GB3 SIGNING

Fifteen-year-old Callum Voisin who took the Ginetta Junior contest by storm on debut this year has become Carlin's first signing for its 2022 GB3 championship campaign.

The Anglo-Swiss switches to single-seaters after a Ginetta Junior season wherein he took seven victories, the joint-highest total, and was the category's early season standard setter.

However by the season's end he slipped to sixth in the standings, in part because of a 70-point penalty for a technical infringement.

Carlin drivers meanwhile have won the last three championships in GB3 and its predecessor BRDC Formula 3, with this year's champion Zak O'Sullivan also starting his car racing in Ginetta Juniors.

Voisin has already participated in a Carlin test day and taken part in simulator sessions ahead of a full winter test programme.

He said: "[Carlin] have impressed me this year with their dominance, and I was blown away by their professionalism when I tested with them."

Team principal Trevor Carlin added: "We've watched him race over the course of the 2021 season and been impressed with his driving and his general attitude in the paddock.

"I have no doubt that Callum will be able to integrate himself well with our GB3 team and hit the ground running."

## ALISHA PALMOWSKI WINS 2022 GINETTA JUNIOR SCHOLARSHIP

Alisha Palmowski has secured a fully funded Ginetta Junior 2022 full-season drive by winning its latest annual scholarship, with it becoming its second female winner after Jamie Chadwick.

Fifteen-year-old Mancunian Palmowski came out on top of more than 60 young drivers in the three-day contest at Ginetta's Blyton Park circuit, that included driving, fitness and media assessments overseen by elite judges including reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion Adam Smalley and factory driver Charlie Robertson.

Palmowski gets drive

Palmowski will therefore make her car-racing debut next year following a successful six-year karting career. Her prize includes all entry fees, use of a G40 Junior race car for the whole season including consumables, insurance and a season supply of race tyres and fuel, plus professional car preparation from an experienced team.

Palmowski said: "I'm absolutely speechless. What an amazing weekend that I'll never forget. I've learnt so much and progressed a lot over these last few days."

Ginetta's Ashley Gallagher added: "There were a number of drivers who could have won. In the end, Alisha produced fantastic performances across the board and is a hugely deserving winner."

## CANADA'S ATLANTIC RACING TEAM LATEST TO PLAN GB4 2022 ENTRY

The GB4 championship has attracted its first international entry in Canada's experienced Atlantic Racing Team, bringing the number of squads intending to compete in the new single-seater category to 11.

The team – which has raced in the Americas, Europe and Asia – has purchased three Tatuus F4-T014 chassis and GB4 will herald the team's return to racing after a two-year hiatus.

Experienced Canadian outfit in GB4 return

The outfit's bosses are also looking to establish a UK base. Team manager Ingo Strackerjan said: "We are very happy to once again enter a top-notch and professionally operated junior series. We selected the UK GB4 series for 2022 and beyond for that exact reason."

## IN BRIEF

### Brilliant Bearman

As Motorsport News closed for press last week inaugural MN Rising Star of the Year Ollie Bearman was confirmed as having joined the Ferrari Driver Academy. The 16-year-old Briton claimed both the Italian and German Formula 4 championships this season, as well as impressed in select GB3 outings.

### Silver service

Inaugural Motorsport News Team of the Year Barwell Motorsport will return after a year away to the GT World Challenge Europe Silver Cup Endurance championship next year with a two-Lamborghini Huracan GT3 effort. Barwell, which won the Silver Cup championship double in 2020, is now seeking six drivers for its line-up.

### TCR on bill

TCR UK will return to British GT's support bill for its first two meetings of 2022, at Oulton Park over April's Easter weekend then at Donington Park on May 28-29. Both will feature two TCR races. These are followed by a three-race Brands Hatch weekend with the Time Attack Championship on June 18-19.

### New BMW

A new F20/21 BMW Series 1 chassis will be introduced to the 750 Motor Club's Roadsports series next year in its Class B, ahead of a planned standalone 116 Sprint Series for the model. The first batch of the turbocharged 240bhp cars are nearing completion and will outstrip performance-wise those in the 116 Trophy.

### CSCC Stateside

The Classic Sports Car Club will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year with two special American race events, first at Daytona on November 4-5 then at Sebring on November 25-26. CSCC last raced at Daytona in 2007. It also has unveiled its 2022 schedule, with more track time to reduce the number of combined races and reserves.

### BRSCC to the rescue

A British Racing and Sports Car Club East Anglia rescue unit travelling to Donington Park's recent Fun Cup meeting, on the Saturday morning at 0530hrs encountered a car on fire on the A14 just past Bury St Edmunds. The crew stopped and put the fire out using a foam extinguisher they were carrying. The car's five occupants were unhurt.

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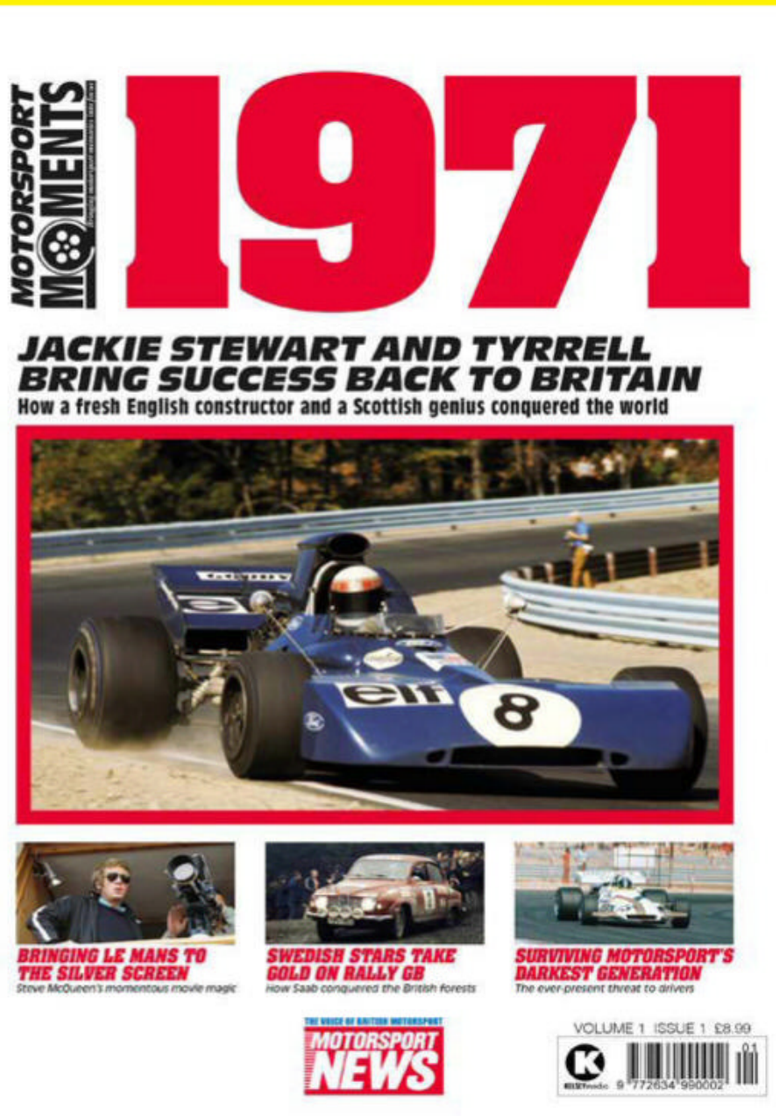
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RALLY NEWS

# EVANS CAUTIOUS ON WRC TITLE HOPES IN SHOWDOWN

## Toyota Yaris man to go toe-to-toe with team-mate Sebastien Ogier at Monza

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

**ESSENTIALS**

**ACI Rally Monza**
**November 18-21**
**WRC round:** 12/12
**Base:** Monza, Italy
**Surface:** Asphalt
**Stages:** 16
**Distance:** 158.11 miles

Evans has to turn around points deficit

Scott Martin (l) and Elfyn Evans will be aiming for more trophies

By Graham Lister

**Elfyn Evans is playing down his chances of preventing Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier from claiming an eighth World crown on Rally Monza this weekend.**

Brit Evans starts the WRC season decider 17 points behind Frenchman Ogier with 30 points still on the table at the Italian Grand Prix venue.

Evans could become World champion for the first time by winning the rally and the event-closing Powerstage but would need Ogier to finish no higher than fourth and be outside the top five on the Powerstage.

While a number of permutations exist, Ogier has scored Powerstage points on 10 out of 11 attempts this season. And of the events he's finished in 2021 having completed the full rally distance, he's only twice not claimed a top-four placing.

"It's good to be going into the final round still with a chance of taking the drivers' title," said Evans, who is co-driven by fellow Brit Scott Martin. "It's an outside chance but Scott and I will give it our best shot. The approach will be just to aim for the best result possible and see what happens."

Evans was seemingly out of the title game following his sixth place on the Acropolis Rally in Greece back in September. But having taken 51 points from a possible 60 on the last two rounds, the 32-year-old from Wales has reignited his championship push.

"After a difficult mid-season, the last couple of rounds have been better for us, but Monza will be a completely different challenge again," Evans said. "The stages in the mountains have a really nice character, but the stages at the circuit are very mixed and not so flowing. It's impossible to capture all of that in a test, but after last year we have a pretty good idea of what to expect."

Evans started last season's Monza finale 14 points ahead of Ogier, but an off on day two when running third handed the initiative Ogier and meant Evans missed out on the title by eight points.

As well as celebrating a third drivers' champion in as many seasons, Toyota is almost assured of the makes' award. With 52 points up for grabs in Monza, Toyota's advantage over Hyundai stands at 47. It means a top-seven finish from Evans, Ogier or Kalle Rovanpera will hand Toyota its first manufacturers' championship since 2018 and its fifth since the WRC began in 1973.

**NO MORE ....**

*ACI Rally Monza will mark the end of an era in more ways than one. Here's a reminder of five things we're unlikely to see again*

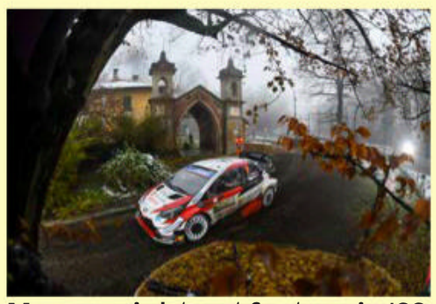
**1 No more World Rally Cars**
The World Rally Car era, which began in 1997, will be over on Sunday night. While detuned versions of the cars are expected to return next season, they will no longer be the headlining act as the hybrid-based Rally1 machines take over from 2022.

**2 No more Ogier and Ingrassia**
When Sebastien Ogier goes part time in 2022, he'll do so without long-term co-driver Julien Ingrassia by his side, with Rally Monza marking Ingrassia's final appearance before he retires from WRC competition aged 41.

**3 No more Ogier World titles**
Ogier's part-time programme next season will almost certainly rule out any more WRC titles. He's claimed seven so far plus the Junior World crown in 2008.

**4 No more WRC2 or WRC3**
From 2022 WRC2 will be WRC2 Open and WRC2 Junior for Rally2 cars, while WRC3 becomes WRC3 and Junior WRC but for Rally3 cars.

**5 No more Monza?**
While 2022 will be anything but Covid-free, every effort is being made to finish next season in Japan rather than Monza, suggesting the WRC's ultimate stand-in rally will be no more after this weekend's second edition.



Monza might not feature in '22

Ingram will get another WRC3 go after surprise Monza call-up

## BRIT INGRAM TARGETS WRC3 ROSTRUM FINISH FOR 2021

Chris Ingram could beat Toksport WRT team-mate Emil Lindholm to third place in the final WRC3 standings after the Briton was handed a late Rally Monza call-up.

October's Rally Spain was expected to mark Ingram and co-driver Ross Whittock's last appearance of 2021.

But they have secured a late WRC3 category entry in Italy in a Toksport Skoda Fabia Rally2 Evo.

"We've had a great year so far and have managed to challenge for the podium at each event," said the 2019 European champion. "Monza will be a difficult course, it's new to us but will be great experience."

Ingram is nine points behind Lindholm in fourth position and needs to finish in the top four to demote the Finn, who hasn't included the Italian round on his schedule.

Meanwhile, the WRC3 title battle is between Poland's Kajetan Kajetanowicz and Frenchman Yohan Rossel.

They are tied on points but Rossel's appeal against his exclusion from the Acropolis Rally, where he took the WRC3 victory, was heard on November 9 but the outcome was still pending when MN went to press.

## HUTTUNEN STEPS IN FOR M-SPORT WRC2 CHANCE

**Jari Huttunen has been handed a Rally Monza career lifeline by M-Sport.**

**Huttunen had been a Hyundai driver since 2018 but was axed following a falling out on Rally Spain and has been without a drive since.**

**With M-Sport's WRC2 Ford Fiesta vacant following Teemu Suninen's decision to leave for Hyundai and Nikolay Gryazin not willing to return to the British squad following a troubled Acropolis Rally, Huttunen was offered the seat for Monza, where he became WRC3 champion in 2020.**

**"It's a new car and team to get to know, which will be a steep learning curve," said Finn Huttunen.**

## CO-DRIVER SWAP FOR SOLBERG IN ITALY

Elliott Edmondson rather than Craig Drew will co-drive Oliver Solberg in an ex-factory Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC on Rally Monza.

Solberg made the announcement after MN's November 11 issue went to press and said the Edmondson's experience at World level won the day.

"He has good experience already, and we have spent the last couple of weeks working hard on pacenotes and sharing ideas," Solberg said. "I'd like to say a big thank you to Craig for such a professional job over the past events. It was always the plan to work with Elliott in Monza, but Craig was fantastic after stepping in at such short notice – he's a top co-driver and even better guy."

Edmondson is Solberg's fourth different co-driver this season following on from Drew, Aaron Johnston and Seb Marshall.

Briton Phil Hall is set to replace Edmondson as Andreas Mikkelsen's co-driver in Monza. Hall had been due to co-drive Jon Armstrong on the clashing Rally Islas Canarias. But with Armstrong no longer taking part on the European championship finale, Hall is free to partner WRC2 champion Mikkelsen.

Briton Edmondson will partner Solberg on the Monza Rally

# RALLY NEWS

Monza-fit McErlean

## McERLEAN IS READY FOR RALLY MONZA

Northern Ireland's Josh McErlean returns to Italy for the final round of the FIA World Rally Championship this weekend confident he can get off to a winning start with Hyundai's new Rally2 car.

McErlean tested the Hyundai after clinching third position in WRC3 on Rally Spain. McErlean believes more success is possible at Rally Monza – an event he's tackled twice already with the Korean marque.

"This is a new car with a lot of potential and I am very excited to get started properly and learn more about it," said McErlean. "The Rally2 car is a completely different type of car compared to the current i20 R5.

"As expected, it has improved in many areas. It's a car that gives you confidence; it is very forgiving in terms of the car's balance."

# MOTORSPORT IRELAND CONGRESS SEEKS TO REDUCE RALLY CALENDAR

## Inaugural congress agreed that a 26-event schedule leaves events under-subscribed

Photos: Chicane Media, Martin Walsh, Josh McErlean

Too much rally? Irish gravel events are in focus for 2022

**By Martin Walsh**

**Chiefs and delegates at the first ever Motorsport Ireland National Congress were unified in calling for next season's rally calendar to be reduced in order to protect the sport and the future of Ireland's organising clubs.**

There are 26 rallies scheduled on the latest draft calendar for 2022. Despite losing both the Clare and Cavan rallies, the consensus remained that more events will need to be culled.

As a result of the ongoing debate, the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship was the only series schedule to be ratified.

No decision was taken on the question of a national rally or a forest rally championship next season, while a dual surface series is also being mooted.

A sub-group within the Rallies Commission will review the situation and deliver a biennial plan, towards which it is anticipated that MI personnel will meet with representatives of the relevant clubs early next week.

The eight-hour congress contained disagreement from the Motor Sport Council members on the submission of motions to the agenda, a number of which were not tabled. A discussion also took place on the votes of no submitted by almost a third of the affiliated clubs earlier this year, for which the chairman of the Royal Irish Automobile Club will be consulted.

## WELSH CHAMPIONSHIP REVERTS TO TRADITIONAL CALENDAR

After two years of Covid-19 disruption, the Welsh Rally Championship returns to an eight-event format in 2022.

This season's series – won last weekend by Garry Pearson – consisted of just four rallies with Rally North Wales, the Plains Rally, Wyedean Stages and Red Kite Stages all lost to coronavirus. Ironically all four of those events will be headlined by the Welsh series next year while the BTRDA and British Rally Championship joins respectively for four and two of the other rounds.

"Despite the challenges the sport has faced during the pandemic, there are many new ideas around that will ensure that the events continue to offer competitors top-quality competition," said championship secretary Dave Evison.

"With a regular road repair programme by Rally4Wales in place and a renewed interest in rallying… and increased awareness of this exciting sport through live online broadcasting, we can't wait to get the 2022 season started in March with Rally North Wales."

**CALENDAR**

**2022 Welsh Rally Championship**

| DATE | EVENT |
|---|---|
| March 26 | Rally North Wales |
| April 9 | Rallynuts Stages |
| May 21 | Plains Rally |
| June 12 | Red Kite Stages |
| July 9 | Nicky Grist Stages |
| September 3 | Woodpecker Stages |
| October 15 | Wyedean Rally |
| October 29 | Cambrian Rally |

Pre-Covid norms in Wales

Title rival Polos will go for their final chukka in Ulster

## CONTENDERS READY FOR BRC SHOWDOWN

British Rally Championship title protagonists Osian Pryce and Matt Edwards believe the pressure is on each other as they enter a winner-takes-all fight on this weekend's Ulster Rally.

Pryce has an eight-point advantage over Edwards in the standings, but with competitors only scoring points from their five best events of seven, either driver will win the title by winning the Ulster.

Edwards, the reigning and double champion, can only be champion via winning the rally while Pryce can prosper if he wins, beats Edwards or Edwards doesn't finish.

"I've just got to go and win it, haven't I?" Edwards summarised. "I haven't got any difficult maths or scenarios to think about, I've just got to go and win it and that's a blessing in disguise."

From the other side of the Melvyn Evans Motorsport awning, Pryce added: "The points may as well be at zero... there's a lot of pressure on [Edwards] from that side of things but for us, we know what we need to do, it's very clear cut."

*For a full BRC title decider preview, see p18*

**SEEDED ENTRY LIST**

**Ulster Rally**

| SEEDED | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod | Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 |
| 2 | Osian Pryce/Noel O'Sullivan | Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 |
| 3 | Callum Devine/Brian Hoy | Ford Fiesta Rally2 |
| 4 | Sam Moffett/Keith Moriarty | Ford Fiesta Rally2 |
| 6 | Jonny Greer/Kirsty Riddick | Citroen C3 Rally2 |
| 7 | Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy | Ford Fiesta R5 |
| 8 | Keith Cronin/Mikie Galvin | Ford Fiesta Rally2 |
| 9 | Cathan McCourt/Liam Moynihan | Ford Fiesta Rally2 |
| 10 | James Wilson/Arthur Kierans | Hyundai i20 R5 |
| 11 | James Williams/Dai Roberts | Hyundai i20 R5 |

## RALLYNUTS STAGES: BY SIMON GRONOW — NOVEMBER 13

## PAYNE WINS, PEARSON TRIUMPHS

Garry Pearson completed his run of four British rallying titles with third place on the Rallynuts Stages enough to claim the BTRDA Gold Star and Welsh Rally Championship crowns.

Pearson and co-driver Niall Burns celebrated while 18-year-old Elliot Payne scored an impressive maiden victory in his Ford Fiesta R5.

The 115-car entry faced three stages in Myherin and Hafren, each run twice, and Payne was fastest on the first stage, where Pearson suffered power steering issues. With the leading six crews sharing the same time on SS2, Pearson fought back on SS3 with fastest time to move back to second place.

Things all went wrong for Pearson on Myherin 2 when a puncture dropped him back to fifth place, before fastest times on the final two tests SS5 where he "just gave it everything," elevated him to third position behind jubilant first-time victor Payne and Gold Star runner-up Callum Black.

"I'm speechless," said a jubilant Pearson at the finish. "That was some effort today, it was really difficult after power steering issue and a stage four puncture. It's been a serious year."

**RESULTS**

**Rallynuts Stages**

| POS | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Elliot Payne/Patrick Walsh | Ford Fiesta R5 | 44m 49s |
| 2 | Callum Black/Tom Woodburn | Ford Fiesta R5 | +10s |
| 3 | Garry Pearson/Niall Burns | Skoda Fabia R5 | +44s |
| 4 | Ian Bainbridge/Will Atkins | Skoda Fabia R5 | +46s |
| 5 | James Wilson/Arthur Kierans | Ford Fiesta R5 | +51s |
| 6 | Perry Gardener/Jack Bowen | Ford Fiesta R5 | +1m 20s |
| 7 | Russ Thompson/Tom Murphy | Mitsubishi Lancer E9 | +1m 28s |
| 8 | Mathew Hirst/Declan Dear | Mitsubishi Lancer E9 | +1m 38s |
| 9 | Osian Pryce/Steven Brown | Ford Escort RS | +3m 04s |
| 10 | Ian Joel/Graeme Wood | Ford Escort Cosworth | +3m 13s |

**Class Winners** RF2.0 Tom Naylor/Tom Bishop (Ford Fiesta ST); 1400C Kelvin Evans/Caron Tomlinson (Nissan Micra); 1400S Richard Jordan/James Gratton-Smith (MG ZR); N3 Jonny Sproat/Peter Johnson (Ford Fiesta); NR4 Pat Nalor/Ian Lawrence (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); R2 Tony Simpson/Ian Bevan (Ford Fiesta); B10 Stewart McClean/Gerard Neeson (Vauxhall Nova); B11 Chris Powell/Jim Lewis (Ford Escort Mk2); B12 Rob Wright/Mark Fisher (Ford Escort Mk2); B13 Thompson/Murphy; B14 Bainbridge/Atkins; H1/2 Ben Smith/Steve Smith (Ford Escort RS2000 Mk1); H3 Nick Elliott/Dave Price (Ford Escort Mk2); H4 Guy Anderson/Steven Davey (Mitsubishi Galant VR4); H6 Pryce/Brown

Teenager Elliot Payne claimed a maiden win on Rallynuts

KERRY WINTER RALLY: BY MARTIN WALSH — NOVEMBER 7

Photos: Martin Walsh

Moffett and Moriarty produced a start-to-finish charge to victory on the Kerry Winter Rally

# MOFFETT DOMINATES KERRY WINTER RALLY

## Hyundai man leaves big field in his wake on Irish asphalt

By Martin Walsh

**Sam Moffett and Keith Moriarty took a clear-cut victory on the Kerry Winter Rally with fastest times on all six stages. They finished 36.6 seconds ahead of Ford Fiesta R5 rookies Gary Kiernan/ Darren O'Brien.**

Only Kiernan and Moffett got through the opening 11-mile Knight's Mountain stage, which was halted when Donagh Kelly crashed his VW Polo GTi.

The second stage, Kielduff, pushed Moffett 14.1s clear of Kiernan, with local ace Rob Duggan 4.2s further behind in his startling self-built Honda-engined Ford Escort, him slotting into third place.

Rain made conditions even more challenging on the final pair of stages, where Moffett was supreme and Kiernan secured second, a position he admitted he would have settled for prior to the start.

The clutch on Colin O'Donoghue's Ford Escort gave way on the road section to SS5 and Kevin Eves pipped him on the final stage.

Winner Moffett had his brother Josh to thank for his part in the victory – the winning Hyundai was the younger Moffett's regular competition car.

### Results

**Kerry Winter Rally**
**Organiser:** Kerry Motor Club **When** November 7
**Where:** Banna/Tralee **Stages:** 6 **Starters:** 139
1 Sam Moffett/Keith Moriarty (Hyundai i20 R5) 50m11.6s; 2 Gary Kiernan/Darren O'Brien (Ford Fiesta R5) +36.6s; 3 Kevin Eves/Chris Melly (Toyota Corolla) +1m44.4s; 4 Colin O'Donoghue/John McElhinney (Ford Escort) +1m47.8s; 5 Owen Murphy/Anthony Nestor (Ford Fiesta R5) 2m.14.8s; 6 Ed O'Callaghan/Charlie McEnery (Ford Escort) 2m19.0s; 7 Cal McCarthy/Derek O'Brien (Citroen DS3 R5) +2m.56.9s; 8 Chris O'Callaghan/Dale McGettigan (Ford Escort) +3m.15.3s; 9 John Warren/Ruthann O'Connor (Toyota Corolla) +3m21.4s; 10 Mike Quinn/ Tony Healy (Ford Escort) 3m34.5s.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

## Davies and Roberts continue Targa blitz

John Davies took yet another clear win on a Targa event when he and navigator Dai Roberts finished seven minutes ahead of the field on the 1000 Tracks Targa.

However, the victory wasn't as decisive as that margin suggested.

Dan Morris/Geth Johnson had led for most of the day and were four minutes in front when gearbox problems stopped their own Ford Puma with one test to go.

Gavin Roger/Georgina Clark had been as high as second when they were slowed by a slipping clutch and had to cut the last test and a half.

Davies/Roberts struggled initially with, at times, unclear route instructions; they, along with a number of others took a maximum on the first test. However, they gained positions as the event went on and survived to take the win.

Ethan Davies/Dan Johnson shared fastest time with Morris/ Johnson on Test 3, but then retired with a broken shaft on Test 4. Huw Morris/Alan Williams went out with the same problem within 200 yards of the start. Meanwhile, Steve Knibbs/Dylan Jenkins had the engine on their Peugeot 206 lose all its water; this put them out. A broken stub axle delayed Cadog Davies/ Fiona Balchin, but they survived to claim 20th place. They were the final finishers.

**Ian Mills**

### Results

**1000 Tracks Targa**
**Organiser:** Heads of the Valley Auto Club **When**: November 7
**Where:** Walters Arena
**Championships:** None
**Tests:** 7 **Starters:** 55.
1 John Davies/Dai Roberts (Ford Puma) 2h21m00s; 2 Ieuan Daniel Reeves/James Griffiths (Mazda MX-5) +7m 07s; 3 Daniel Williams/ Shaun Richards (BMW 318Ti); 4 Danny Tod/Richard Aston (Ford Escort); 5 Tom Westbrook/John Tear (Nissan Micra); 6 Lewis Davies/ Steve Peploe (Ford Escort); 7 James Thomas/Leighton Howells (Honda Civic); 8 Jason Cornell/Leonard Black (Nissan Micra); 9 Neal Jones/ Kevin Jones (Proton Satria); 10 Lee Cooper/Ross Truszkowski (BMW 316).
**Class winners:** 2: James/Jones; **Clubman:** Reeves/Griffiths

**Mitchell steps in to help in cave rescue**

*Gary Mitchell secured 15th place and second in class, before, being a cave club member, diverting to assist his colleagues in the rescue of an injured caver in the Brecon Beacons. His rally car could be seen in the background of the BBC News reports.*

IRISH RX: MONDELLO PARK BY HAL RIDGE — NOVEMBER 14

Tohill on top at Mondello in Irish RX series round four

# TOHILL EARNS SUCCESS IN IRISH RX AT MONDELLO

Derek Tohill provided a dominant display in the penultimate round of the Irish Rallycross Championship at Mondello Park.

Tohill, the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy leader, took a step closer to claiming his fifth Irish Rallycross Championship title with a clean sweep of wins in his OlsbergsMSE-built Ford Fiesta Supercar.

Rallycross stalwart Tommy Graham followed Tohill to the line in each heat, although Declan Kelly got past Graham for second in the final.

Behind the three Fiestas, Philip Kelly claimed the top qualifier position with his Toyota MR2 in the Modified class for two-wheel-drive cars and drove to victory in the final. Peter McGarry drove his Volvo C30 to second ahead of Alan Crockett's Vauxhall Corsa. In the Superfinal, it was McGarry who finished best of the Modified runners in fourth.

**Irish Rallycross Championship**
**Organiser:** Mondello Park Sports Club **When:** November 14 **Where:** Mondello Park **Starters:** 48
**Super Final:** 1 Derek Tohill (Ford Fiesta) 3m47.735s; 2 Declan Kelly (Ford Fiesta) +3.471; 3 Tommy Graham (Ford Fiesta) ; 4 Peter McGarry (Volvo C30) ; 5 Philip Kelly (Toyota MR2) ; 6 Lloyd Spendlove (Lotus Exige) +24.261s; **Supercar:** Tohill; **Modified:** P Kelly. **Junior:** Loughlin Farrell (Ford Fiesta). **Buggy:** Padraig Leeson (Buggy). **Ford Fiestas:** Ben Mullins (Ford Fiesta). **Rally Car:** Thomas O'Rafferty (Vauxhall Nova). **Autocross:** William Cavanagh (Yacar Buggy)

# PASTRANA DOUBLES CAREER WIN COUNT

Nitro Rallycross series founder Travis Pastrana dominated the third round of the series' inaugural season at the Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park in Phoenix last weekend.

The result was his second rallycross career victory, which arrived almost 10 years after his first. Pastrana topped qualifying on day one, then won the opening heat race to progress directly to the final. World RX leader Timmy Hansen finished second, former F1 and NASCAR driver Scott Speed third and rallycross debutant NASCAR legend Kyle Busch picked his way through to finish fourth. Hansen leads the standings, while British drivers Liam Doran and Oliver Bennett had torrid days. Doran rolled in his heat race before even making it to Turn 1, while Bennett was slowed by turbo problems.

Toyota NASCAR star Busch finished fourth in a de-badged Subaru works entry

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# THE FIGHT TO WIN THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

## *Paul Lawrence says it is impossible to pick a Roger Albert Clark Rally winner*

McCormack knows how to win the epic event

The Craik stage will provide a unique opportunity for competitors

Stanely Orr shows how to tackle Gartheiniog: sideways in an Escort

**In the 14-year history of the Roger Albert Clark Rally, there has never been an entry like this both in terms of quality and quantity.**

Picking a winner is not easy and any one of the top 10 or 15 crews are in with a real shout if a little bit of good fortune goes their way. With five days, 31 special stages and 330 competitive miles, no-one is going to have a completely clear run and even until the end Crychan on Monday afternoon, a small problem could turn the rally on its head.

Topping the entry are double winners Marty McCormack and co-driver Barney Mitchell, who know all about how to win this rally. The Northern Irish crew will surely set the benchmark.

However, McCormack knows that the opposition this year is tougher than ever and it starts right behind him in the shape of Jason Pritchard and Phil Clarke in their Escort Mk2. This is a fresh new car from the Scott Williams team and Pritchard will make it sing. He's been in the lead of the event before when mechanical issues have thwarted his challenge and winning the Roger Albert is clearly unfinished business.

Running right behind Pritchard is another very strong contender, the Escort Mk2 of Osian Pryce and Noel O'Sullivan. They are one of three crews stepping back from modern machinery and all are in with a shout of victory. Pryce has the most experience in this type of car but no-one should discount Rhys Yates/James Morgan and Seb Perez/Gary McElhinney.

Fabulous depth of quality comes from crews like Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis, Roger Chilman/Patrick Walsh and Paul Barrett/Gordon Noble, and those three crews have experience and pace to spare. Ben Friend and Cliff Simmons have done more gravel miles in Escort Mk2s this year than most, while the huge experience of Steve Bannister and co-driver Callum Atkinson can never be discounted.

**SEEDED ENTRY LIST**

**The top 10**

| | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Martin McCormack/Barney Mitchell | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 2 | Jason Pritchard/Phil Clarke | Ford Escort RS1800 |
| 3 | Osian Pryce/Noel O'Sullivan | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 4 | Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis | Ford Escort RS |
| 5 | Roger Chilman/Patrick Walsh | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 6 | Paul Barrett/Gordon Noble | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 7 | Rhys Yates/James Morgan | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 8 | Seb Perez/Gary McElhinney | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 9 | Ben Friend/Cliff Simmons | Ford Escort Mk2 |
| 10 | Steve Bannister/Callum Atkinson | Ford Escort Mk2 |

Just outside the top 10 the quality continues with 2019 BHRC champions Simon Webster and Jez Rogers, along with Adrian Hetherington/Ronan O'Neill and Alan Walker/John Connor. A real dark horse will be the Porsche 911 of Ryan Champion and Craig Thorley. Ryan's pace on the recent Malton Stages suggests that he will be a match for some of the very quickest Escorts. A key element of the event is the Open Rally, which caters for all two-wheel-drive rally cars right through to the modern day. Top of the pack is the 2.5-litre Ford Escort Mk2 of Irish crew, David Condell and Paul Kelly; however the 2.3-litre Escort of David Hutchinson and Jeff Garnett will be strong as will the rapid Talbot Sunbeam of Andy Davison and Tom Murphy. From the 1600 ranks, the standout crew is Neil Weaver and Jack Morton in their exceedingly quick Opel Corsa S1600.

Among the historic classes, one of the best entries ever for this event will deliver close contests right through the order as the smaller-engined and older cars battle just as hard for their own share of the glory.

In Category 1 for the pre '68 cars the pace should be in the hands of Ricky Proffitt and Graham Wild in their Porsche 911S, but Bob Bean and Captain Thompson (Ford Lotus Cortina) will be contenders.

Class C2 for the 1600cc cars in Category 2 has a superb entry and should be the scene of a tremendous battle. Absolute pacesetters should be Adam Milner and Roy Jarvis in their Ford Escort Mexico for Milner has shown unbelievable pace on previous outings. Another rising rally star is Isle of Man-based Rory McCann who has his dad Paul alongside in their Hillman Avenger and he too has fine potential.

In class C3 the field is led away by the rare-but-rapid BMW 2002 of Terry Cree and Richard Shores, while Class C5 is for the BDA-engined Ford Escort Mk1s and is headed by Stanley Orr and Graham Henderson. Among the Category 3 cars an excellent 1600cc Class D2 entry is topped by the Escort Mk2s of John Mennell/Tom Spencer and Alan Jardine/ Chris McSherry. ■

***Pritchard has some unfinished business***

Photos: Paul Lawrence

Ryan Champion could turn heads

**DAY BY DAY: THE 2021 ROUTE**

*Rally manager Colin Heppenstall is MN's expert guide to the stages.*

**Thursday, November 25**
*Four stages and 35 competitive miles in the western end of Kielder.*
**Colin Heppenstall:** "Thursday afternoon is made up of stages we know and love. We have a lovely 12-mile Kershope stage with long straights, square 90s and a bit of all sorts. It goes up high at Glen Dhu and with the clouds down it could be foggy up there, you get all sorts of weather in Kershope."

**Friday, November 26**
*Eight stages and 108 competitive miles in the central block of Kielder.*
**Colin Heppenstall:** "Friday is the longest day with 108 stage miles. The stages in the central block of Kielder are different and they are even different between the stages. Falstone is a completely different stage, very closed in and half the stage hasn't been used for at least seven or eight years."

**Saturday, November 27**
*Eight stages and 76 competitive miles in southern Scotland.*
**Colin Heppenstall:** "The stages in Scotland will be a bit more familiar to competitors as they've done them for the last two events. I haven't changed the stages too much and Greskine is exactly the same stage. Only this rally uses Craik which is a lovely stage. They've done some harvesting and most of the stage is actually Tarmac chippings so it's very hard. It's like driving on a road and is so smooth."

**Sunday, November 28**
*Six stages and 73 competitive miles in mid-Wales.*
**Colin Heppenstall:** "Sunday takes the rally into classic Welsh stages where the R.A.C. hasn't been before in Dyfnant, Gartheiniog and Dyfi. Rally4Wales has done a fantastic job on the regrading and these stages haven't been used for at least two years, probably since Wales Rally GB. These stages have a different nature and are much wider."

**Monday, November 29**
*Five stages and 38 competitive miles in south and west Wales.*
**Colin Heppenstall:** "We're basing Monday out of Walters Arena, which is different to other Welsh stages. If it's wet it can be slippery in places and in other places it is just like any normal forest stage. We finish with 10 miles in Crychan and another long, very wide, sweeping classic Welsh stage. I think the competitors will love it to finish the event off."

The crews will once again prepare to tackle Kielder's forests

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

## Motorsport News' guide to following the epic event

The older historic cars (in the pre '68 Category 1) and all cars up to 1600cc will run in the first block of around 30 cars, running in reversed order. There will then be a gap of up to 15 minutes before the rest of the field, which will run in normal order with the fastest cars first. After each day, the cars are re-seeded but still run in the same two groups.

If a car has problems and cannot immediately continue, the crew can still rejoin the rally later under SuperRally rules if the car can be fixed. The crew will pick up significant time penalties for any special stages that are missed, but at least they can carry on.

On Saturday night, the whole rally will leave Carlisle and head to Welshpool for the restart at lunchtime on Sunday. For this transport section, competitors can load the rally cars onto trailers for the 200-mile journey south.

The top three finishers will take part in a parade around the Carmarthen Velodrome after the finish of the rally. There will be a ceremonial finish in the town centre from around 1600hrs on Monday November 29 and then the top three crews will complete three laps of the 400m banked concrete velodrome in formation.

The best way to keep in touch with the event is through a series of live broadcasts which will run on the event's Facebook page, with Matt Cotton reporting from controls and service areas throughout the five days. In addition, the Special Stage team will be out filming and will broadcast a review programme each evening at around 1900hrs.

Spectator parking areas are available at most special stages. Tickets can still be bought in advance (closing date Thursday November 18), or day car park tickets (£25 per car) can be bought at all car park entrances. For more details of spectator tickets and car park locations, please visit racrmc.org.

# PAUL LAWRENCE

**RALLY CORRESPONDENT**

## *"We can shut out the world and just enjoy rallying"*

**It's back! After two years of global upheaval, the rally of the year is back. The 14th edition of the Roger Albert Clark Rally will be the biggest and best yet and I cannot wait.**

It seems a long time ago that a select group of us stood on the stop line of the final Bewshaugh stage on a typically damp and murky Monday afternoon in Kielder to cheer the arrival of 2019 winners, Marty McCormack and Barney Mitchell.

At the time, we could never have appreciated that our sport was soon to be shutdown by Covid and only in the last couple of months have we been back in the forests. Events like the Woodpecker, Trackrod, Carlisle and Cambrian have been great days out but now comes the one that many competitors, fans and marshals have been waiting for: the Roger Albert.

This one event has given me more top memories than any other and I'm sure we are going to add more memories this time around. Next week, for five days we can shut the strife and aggravation of the real world out and concentrate on the sight and sound of rally cars on classic forest stages. It is a pure form of escapism.

This rally is a test of endurance for everyone and it is a physical challenge, with early starts, late finishes, changeable weather and more: all of the elements that make it such a special rally. For five days, we will all be transported back to our younger selves and memories of the old RAC Rally will be rekindled.

If you've yet to experience the Roger Albert Clark Rally, I commend it to you. The sound of a high-revving BDG working its way through a dark forest still sends a tingle down my spine.

Though Covid has cost the event 10 to 15 European entries, the 147 cars on the start list is a record and clearly shows that competitors are looking for a rallying adventure. But this is not just an adventure for the crews, it is a very special event for the teams, the marshals, the fans and even the media.

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Landmark result for Merc's star as he denies Norris a maiden win
LEWIS HAILS A MAGICAL MOMENT AS HE HITS A CENTURY
By Matt James
Lewis Hamilton has hailed his rivals after landing his 100th grand prix win in Russia on Sunday, snatching the victory from fellow Brit Lando Norris.
From pole position, McLaren man Norris seemed set to take his maiden victory until a late rain shower left him slithering off the circuit. Hamilton had been called in by his Mercedes team and swapped tyres. He was able to hunt down Norris and take the race win in the dying moments.
Hamilton, who finished one place ahead of his title rival Max Verstappen, says the 100-win benchmark is something he finds hard to believe.
The seven-time champion said: "It's a magical moment. I could only ever have dreamed of still being here and having this opportunity to win these races and get to drive against such phenomenal talent this late in my career and to continue to building with Mercedes. I'm so proud of everything we've done, not only on track but also off."
Full report, p4
Special feature: Lewis's best wins p30
Lewis has achieved his big target
Hamilton left it late to pounce for his 100th win
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# HISTORICS

## DOWN THE WORKSHOP

### 1934 MG Q TYPE

**Current owner:** Roger Daniell

Daniell's distinctive MG

**It is a factory-built Q Type**

"It is 0251, the first of the Q Types produced. There were eight of them and it was built in 1934 by the MG factory. The first owner was Bill Everett, who was the director of the Crystal Palace circuit. After that it was bought by Jock Manby-Colegrave who had Dudley Froy drive it. In 1935, it was converted to a single-seater to race on the outer circuit at Brooklands and it did the 500-mile race in 1935 and '36. They had it until about 1936 or '37."

**It was crashed and stored**

"In 1936, it was badly crushed. At some stage, the engine, supercharger and gearbox from 0251 finished up in George Harvey Noble's car. Bill Humphreys bought the damaged rolling chassis. He had a garage in London and it was stored in his basement during the War along with the original two-seater body. As far as I know, the body finished up in Ireland."

**David Murray raced it**

"David Murray, who later formed Ecurie Ecosse, bought the car in 1946 and got Wilkie Wilkinson to work on it. Murray did one or two events at the Tallaght circuit in Ireland. It was then sold through Reg Parnell and bought by Geoff Lant who raced it quite successfully from about 1946 to 1950. It was then sold to Doug Bagshaw and last used in 1956 at Mallory when he crashed during a Wednesday-evening practice session. He ran it up a bank, flipped it over and was thrown out and quite badly injured. Bob Gerard was first on the scene and organised for him to be taken away. And that was the last time the car was ever used."

**It's now fully rebuilt**

"Nine years after the crash I got to hear about it and I acquired the remains in 1964. It was rebuilt by 1971 and got put in a shed where it stayed for 50 years. It went into four sheds, actually! Then Peter Green took an interest and in 2002 we decided to rebuild it with a proper engine. I didn't retire until I was 73, which was four years ago now. After that, my son Mark and I set about it with a vengeance and put a four-cylinder 750cc engine back in. The Vintage Sports-Car Club event at Mallory Park in August 2020 was its first race meeting in 56 years."

Rebuilt Escort will head into the forests

Photos: Paul Lawrence, Ben Lawrence

Pryce: R.A.C. challenge

# PRYCE PREPARES FOR MARATHON ROGER ALBERT CHALLENGE

## British Rally Championship title ace hopes to sign off season in style

By Paul Lawrence

**Depending upon the outcome of the Ulster Rally, Osian Pryce could arrive at the start of the Roger Albert Clark Rally next week as the new British Rally champion.**

However, regardless of what happens among the modern R5 cars, the Welshman will be a major contender as he tackles the five-day event, which runs from November 25-29, for the first time with Irish co-driver Noel O'Sullivan alongside.

The 28-year-old, who grew up in the Dyfi Valley next to the famous forest, has already enjoyed good form in a few outings in a Ford Escort Mk2 and will be back in the car run by Grant Shand at Rally Xtreme. It's a very different package to the VW Polo R5 he's been driving in this year's BRC.

"It's the same Escort we used before, but it's been freshly rebuilt. I think the last time in it on gravel was Rally North Wales in 2019," he said. "There are worse things to be doing then rallying a Ford Escort Mk2 over a week in November, so I'm really looking forward to it. Sunday's route goes past home, so it's quite nice to have that.

"It's a different challenge. The top boys that do the event every time, they're always on it from the first stage, but you've just got to look after the car. They're not modern cars with modern suspension, and you've got to bear that in mind and the rally's quite long, with dark stages as well. I just want to go out and enjoy it!"

Yates ran on the Carlisle Stages to get familiar with the Escort

## Yates ready to run his Covid project

British Rally Championship contender Rhys Yates will contest the Roger Albert Clark Rally in a freshly prepared Ford Escort Mk2.

Yates and co-driver James Morgan contested the Carlisle Stages last month as a shakedown event for the BDG-powered car and started the event with just nine miles of testing under their belt.

"By stage four it was starting to click and every corner I was getting a little bit more comfortable," said Yates on the Carlisle event. "It went well and I enjoyed it but it was very, very difficult to judge the grip. It was a really useful day."

The immaculate Escort was a backburner project for Yates based on a bodyshell that he'd owned for several years. "It was a Covid project to get on with it," he said.

Yates, 29, from Chesterfield has competed at both British and WRC level with the M-Sport team.

## Bengry relishing Ascona comeback

After a four-year sabbatical, the Opel Ascona of Theo Bengry will return to competition on the Roger Albert Clark Rally next weekend.

The Ascona is the car that Bengry used to win the 1983 Motoring News Road Rally Championship and has been in his ownership ever since. Its last serious competitive outing was the 2017 Roger Albert Clark when it retired mid-rally with gearbox failure.

A recent oil leak drama has been resolved and after a good test session Bengry and long-time co-driver Les Forsbrook will start the five-day event in one of two Asconas on the entry list. Between them, the Herefordshire friends have over 70 years of rallying experience.

Bengry will bring out classic Ascona

## DYAS CLEANS UP ON RALLY OF THE TESTS

**Paul Dyas and Martyn Taylor took victory on the recent RAC Rally of the Tests in their Volvo Amazon. Former stage rally driver Dyas had previously won a Gold Medal on Le Jog but winning the Rally of the Tests was a major ambition. The three-and-a-half day event took in 29 special tests and 22 regularity sections in a route from Leeds to Edinburgh.**

## Delayed McRae event for Knockhill in July '22

The McRae Rally Challenge will return to the Knockhill circuit in Scotland over the weekend of July 2-3.

The rallying celebration was originally planned for 2020 to coincide with the 25th anniversary of Colin McRae's World Rally Championship crown.

The weekend will celebrate the successes of three generations of the McRae family: Jimmy, his sons Colin and Alister and grandson Max.

Jimmy McRae said: "One benefit of the delay is that Max will have just turned 18 and so Alister, Max and I will be competing head-to-head in the same rally. I don't know if three generations have ever done that before, but I'm hoping that I can show them that grandfather is still pretty handy behind the wheel!"

## IN BRIEF

**RS2000 for R.A.C.**

One of the rarest cars on the Roger Albert Clark Rally will be the 1995 Group A Ford Escort RS2000 as campaigned by Gwyndaf Evans in that year's British Rally Championship. Now, it is owned and is being rallied by Carlisle driver Darren Martin and his co-driver Peter Johnson. This will be Martin's first event with the car and he'll start on stages that are very close to his home in Longtown.

**Brits storm France**

British racers Mike Fry, Chris Snowdon and father-and-son Ross and Nick Hyett finished 12th overall and third in the Sports 2000 class in the recent Les 2 Tours d'Horloge at Paul Ricard. They tackled the 24-hour race for historic cars in a 1984 Tiga SC83, entered as Equipe Rosbif, and Fry reported that it was an excellent event in its first running since 2014.

**Shepherd's delight**

Running towards the end of the field on the Roger Albert Clark Rally is the Ford Escort Mk2 of Keith Shepherd and Rowan Corney from Hampshire. Shepherd has been involved in motorsport for over 40 years as a driver, co-driver, marshal and scrutineer and he reckons that competing on the event is the fulfilment of a lifetime ambition. He also reckons it's a great way to celebrate his 67th birthday, which happens this week.

**Bri Riddell**

The Craik stage in southern Scotland on Saturday of the Roger Albert Clark Rally will be dedicated to the memory of Bri Riddell. Along with his brother Doug, Bri was an enthusiastic supporter of the rally and would always be out on the stages, often flying the Saltire flag in support of the Scottish crews. Sadly, he died earlier this year and to honour him the Craik stage, one of his favourites, has been named in his memory.

**A flood for Evans**

The Wales Motorsport squad, headed by Meirion Evans, is one of the biggest teams on this year's Roger Albert Clark Rally with a line-up of five immaculate Ford Escort Mk2s. Heading the team will be the cars of Roger Chilman/Patrick Walsh, who finished third two years ago, and Paul Barrett/Gordon Noble. Sacha Kakad/James Aldridge are next up, followed by Northern Ireland crew Fintan and Cormac McGrady and Welsh crew Ron Morgan/Marc Clatworthy.

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FEATURE

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

# JOHNNIE MULHOLLAND: IRELAND'S UNDERCOVER RISING RALLY STAR

***He might have flown under the radar but Irishman's 2021 BRC Academy campaign is proof that won't be the case for much longer. By Luke Barry***

Irishman's grown used to champagne

Mulholland claimed the win on the Trackrod Rally

**Ireland is awash with talented young rally drivers at the moment who are all excelling on the international and national stages. Many of them, like William Creighton and Eamonn Kelly, are receiving great plaudits – and rightly so. But one driver who's unfairly evaded the spotlight is the first British Rally class champion of 2021: Johnnie Mulholland.**

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Mulholland tells MN. "The big thing with us Irish drivers that have Irish licenses – which I do – Motorsport Ireland obviously has quite a keen interest and as you say, the guys in the Rally4s you have William, who I'm very good friends with, Eamonn who runs out of the same camp I do and all those other guys that are always in the spotlight as such because they're doing stellar jobs, so there's no reason they shouldn't be.

"Of course just being in a slightly lower class I suppose you're not in that as much, but I was the first BRC champion of 2021 out of the classes. People recognise that and they do articles, the BRC puts media up and everything it's good, it's good in that respect. It puts your name out there a bit."

After just five of the seven rounds, Mulholland and co-driver Calum Maguire were the BRC Academy champions in their Ford Fiesta R2T and won free entries into all 2022 Junior BRC rounds as a result. That prize, coupled to the fact that Mulholland's Fiesta is older and not as quick as the modern Rally4 examples, played into his thinking when selecting a plan of attack in 2021.

"It was tactical from the get-go," he reveals. "I entered the Academy purely because I had a slightly older car that I hadn't used that much, so I thought I'll give this a crack and if all goes well and I manage to win the championship it gives me free entries for 2022. I remember chatting to Matt [Cotton] from the BRC at the start of the year and said 'I'm going to do this, these are my intentions and these are my goals, this is what I'm going to try and do' – and that's what I've done."

The bare statistics illustrate a Mulholland whitewash. He won the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park, the Grampian Forest Rally, Trackrod Rally Yorkshire, Mull Rally and the Cambrian Rally and will almost certainly win the Ulster Rally too with main rival Fraser Anderson not taking part. However, it wasn't quite that simple.

"Fraser was very quick on gravel – quicker than I was probably," Mulholland concedes. "I managed to beat him in one stage on the Nicky Grist which I was happy enough with before I had a small excursion into a ditch and then the other rounds you go into it in your head saying to yourself 'he's quicker on gravel than I am, I really need to be quicker' so you go in and try and be quicker."

And that's exactly what Mulholland set about doing. "Nicky Grist kind of put it in my head that we really needed to up our pace on the loose," he explains. "So we did a couple of tests and everything like that and felt comfortable, but we still seemed to be on the back foot a little bit. On Mull, Fraser was there but had an early retirement, I think we would've beaten Fraser on Mull anyway – not to sound big headed or anything but we were considerably faster than him on the Tarmac at the start of the year, so logically it seemed like that was going to happen.

"But Mull was a tricky one again, I wasn't overly happy with my notes and just found the whole event difficult in general. Plus I had it in my head that if I finished Mull I had the championship secured, and then on a couple of the other gravel rounds like Grampian I felt like we were just messing about and not committing to things we should be committing to and stuff like that. So I suppose there is still a bit of learning to be done."

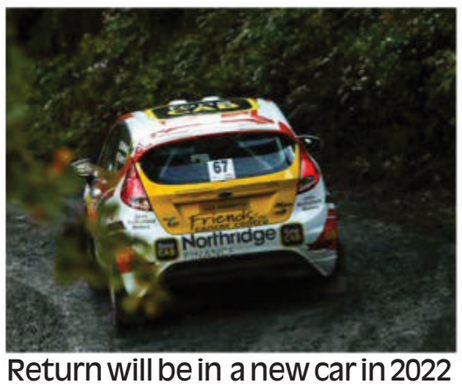
It's refreshing to hear a rally driver speaking so candidly, but Mulholland is no fool. He knows the step he will need to make to compete in JBRC next year against so many talented drivers who are ragging their cars for all they are worth. But equally, he knows the timing is right for him to make that leap – as proved by his emphatic "yeah definitely, definitely" response when asked if he feels he's ready for the challenge.

"By stepping up to that class alone I think it's going to force us to up our pace anyway, the car's a bit quicker as well but the car only does so much," he says. "I have to have a certain input so by stepping up to that faster class it's going to force me to go faster because if I don't, I'm going to be really, really left behind. Am I on their pace at the minute? Probably not. Am I going to have to be very quickly? Yeah. We'll try and keep it the right way up but still go fast."

Before Mulholland gets there though he has his home event. the Ulster, to negotiate. He says his approach will mirror that of the Cambrian – which he described as "probably the roughest rally I've ever done" but was rewarded with second overall in the JBRC despite his Academy-spec car – where he opted to take it cautiously with nothing to gain but experience.

"The Ulster, because it's my home rally I don't want to do anything stupid at it," Mulholland laughs, nervously, "and gauging the conditions can be a tricky one. [But] being the home rally we'll maybe try and go a bit faster depending on who the competition is though. Same thing as the Cambrian, there's no point doing something silly because we're going to be selling the car at the end of it anyway."

In rallying, nothing is a certainty. But it seems a safe bet that Mulholland will again perform this weekend and this time next year, could even be toasting yet another British championship title… ■


Return will be in a new car in 2022

**"This season was part of a plan"**

**Johnnie Mulholland**

Tarmac pace has been the key

## Living out a shared dream

Johnnie Mulholland is the son of the late John Mulholland, an Irish rallying regular who tragically lost his battle with cancer in August 2019 – on the day of that year's Ulster. At the time Johnnie was in the middle of an Irish Tarmac campaign but was always keen to continue his rallying career.

"It's definitely strange without my father there, definitely strange, because he was the one who got me into that and was at near enough every round," he says. "I'd obviously still be rallying if he was here, I'm sure he'd still want me to be rallying but I suppose it still is a bit of a connection it to him as such. It feels like I'm doing what needs to be done.

"It's funny I'm sat in one of our boardrooms in the showroom here and we've got one of dad's Escorts in the showroom that I'm looking at, and stuff like that we've got a big connection to motorsport through business and just myself and my father.

"Of course what's happened is very unfortunate but I think it's what my father would still want me to be doing."

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757



# WINNER TAKES ALL

## PRYCE AND EDWARDS' BRITISH RALLY TITLE BATTLE

***If either driver wins this weekend's Ulster Rally this weekend, they win the BRC. Luke Barry spoke to Matt Edwards and Osian Pryce about their title chances***

Pryce is closing in on a first championship title

Edwards can win another title with Ulster victory

A shunt on the Mull Rally dented Matt Edwards' BRC title ambition

Osian Pryce has taken two wins and sits on top of the points table

**Margins are everything in rallying. But speak to Osian Pryce, and he'll tell you they actually mean very little this weekend.**

Pryce leads the British Rally Championship ahead of its final round, the Ulster Rally, over reigning champion and team-mate Matt Edwards. But because of the way in which the dropped points system works, either Volkswagen Polo GTI R5 driver can win the title if they win Saturday's 93-mile event.

Edwards' season started stronger. Although Pryce nipped ahead of him on the unorthodox season-opener at Oulton Park, Edwards won the Nicky Grist Stages and dominated Trackrod Rally Yorkshire after resolving an engine issue on the Grampian Forest Rally.

Pryce meanwhile was consistently on the podium – he has not been off it all season so far – but lacked the ultimate pace of his team-mate.

Mull Rally changed the dynamic. With just the pair of them entered, it was a one-on-one and Edwards made an uncharacteristic mistake half a mile into the first stage. That put Pryce in the ascendency and left him clear to take a first BRC victory in seven years. He duly won the Cambrian Rally, too, while Edwards ran into yet more strife; a rut kicking his Polo R5 into a bank and causing significant damage. Third place after some resourceful repairs kept him in the title hunt – just.

"I was very close to the limit of what I thought I could get away with trying to repair that car on the Cambrian," Edwards admits. "What I generally do in that situation is just stop for a minute and just think 'right, what have I got? What do I need to do, and what have I got?' The answer to the last one was f*** all, so it was quite difficult. And the repair that we managed didn't fill us with a massive amount of confidence, but it worked with some tweaks and adjustments as we went through the day.

"We were losing 30 seconds, 40 seconds a stage or whatever which was fine to get round and get the points, I was just surprised we got as many as we did but again that proves the value of not giving up and it would've been very easy to just say 'I've had enough of this and park it up'. But there's too many other people involved in my rallying to give up because I've had enough. I think that's probably the best quote to sum it up."

Edwards had been just 6.2 seconds behind Pryce before the incident and says "there was no doubt in my mind we were going to reel him in" across the afternoon. Pryce, predictably, sees it differently and believes "nobody's really been there to challenge Matt" on his home event "and I think it's fair to say we did that fair and square regardless of what problem he had afterwards".

Edwards has had tough events

"It didn't really hit me what we'd managed to achieve," he reflects, having finally found a set-up he was comfortable with. "It's the best I have driven all year. I don't think people understand what a small difference can make, like an equation if you like: this difference equals that performance gain or that time difference. And to get seconds on people, you have to do something drastic. To get tenths of seconds up on a rival who is equally as fast is quite some doing but to get seconds is a big ask, but we managed to do that on the first stage.

"What we did was good. However you can't get sucked in to sort of thinking we did it there, it'll just happen again," Pryce cautions himself. "You still have to focus on the Ulster as a new rally. We'll treat it exactly the same as how we prepped as the Cambrian: do our bit from the pacenotes side, hopefully have a good test and get the car where we need it and same strategy then on the rally."

The permutations are fairly straightforward for both. Only a win will do for Edwards. Any other result and he will lose his British title. Pryce doesn't

> ***"I hope we don't have back luck in Ulster"***
>
> **Matt Edwards**

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Win on the Cambrian was a boost for Pryce

**2021 SCORECARD**

**Osian Pryce**
**Points:** 106
**Max points:** 116
**Wins:** 2
**Podiums:** 6
**Stage wins:** 10
**Retirements:** 0
**Ulster wins (BRC):** 1 (2013)

**Matt Edwards**
**Points:** 98
**Max points:** 111
**Wins:** 2
**Podiums:** 4
**Stage wins:** 28
**Retirements:** 1
**Ulster wins (BRC):** 2 (2018, 2019)

need to win if Edwards doesn't, but the most likely way of preventing that from happening is by winning the rally as the two protagonists are expected to set the pace. The simplicity of the task at hand is making Edwards feel less pressurised than in 2018 and '19 where he entered the finale with a points lead to protect.

"I've just got to go and win it haven't I?" he says. "I haven't got any difficult maths or scenarios to think about have I? I've just got to go and win it and that's a blessing in disguise. I don't feel like it's mine to lose at all which has been the situation before, so it's fairly simple and straightforward. I'm confident I've got the car, I'm confident in the set-up and the tyres and everything, I'm confident that I can go and do it. I think it's just more a case of hoping the bit of bad luck we've had this year doesn't rear its head this time and we can just let the ingredients that we know we've got pull through."

An Edwards win is probable too. He's scored top championship points on the last two editions of the Ulster in 2018 and '19 on a rally he feels he has a "really good vibe" with: "[We had a] great result in '19 with Craig [Breen] there. Great result in '18, I still regard '18 as one of my best drives with the lack of familiarity with the stages we used, that was really good. [It was a] totally different rally to this year but '19 was very good and I think the car's brilliant on those lanes, it was brilliant on Mull and we don't really intend to do a lot different to the car from what we had at Mull so that's quite nice. It's almost as simple as it could be really."

Pryce's position is more precarious than the standings would have you believe. His consistent scoring has effectively been wiped out by the best five scores from seven rule, so he'll be on a maximum attack too. He has similarly strong form on the Ulster, winning in 2013 and challenging for victory in 2017 too, but lacked confidence on the asphalt of Mull earlier in the season. However he's confident that won't be an issue this time around as on Mull he, with a lead to protect, wasn't committing 100% "which the car does not like", and it was later discovered a rear damper was broken that was compromising the handling.

"The points may as well be at zero, really," Pryce says. "Yeah, they're slightly in my favour should something go wrong on his side, there's a bit more pressure on him than me so to speak. Yeah, I'm ahead but I've got a couple of points in the bank should anything happen. Whichever way Matt looks at it, yes, he has to win but he also has to finish and not do any mistakes. These last two rallies have been very, very costly on him so there's a lot of pressure on him from that side of things but for us, we know what we need to do, it's very clear cut, and we just have to try and put it all together and make it happen."

In contrast to Edwards, Pryce's form has come at the critical moment. He's the driver with the momentum behind him while Edwards looked a massive title favourite after Yorkshire but a messy October on Mull and the Cambrian derailed things.

"That's the frustrating thing because I feel like we've been the fastest when everything's [worked]," rues Edwards. "I know the Cambrian first stage was a shock, but we made some changes to the car on the road [section] then to get the performance that we had on the next two stages. And that was in a car that was very, very uncomfortable to me, to get those times required big risks really. Risk to me is trying to go the speed you need to go without the feeling from the car underneath you that you want. And that's what stage two and three on the Cambrian were, the package that we had wasn't working as it should have done but I was able to get the times.

"For me it's not very often I've had to do that, to still set competitive times on those two was big for me and I thought once we sorted something in service, I thought we were good to go then. On the Grampian I was confident we'd get a lot closer to Matthew [Wilson] but for the mechanical problem, and Mull [was] obviously my fault but the pace after that sort of speaks for itself really.

Pryce is sure, however, that he can complete the mission. "I've got no doubts in my mind that it can be done," he says. "At the end of the day if you can have a run in the championship like we've had this year, it's taken me until basically the Cambrian to feel happy with the car and we've been leading the championship up until then. If everything clicks, which it's managed to click for Matt earlier in the year when I wasn't happy with everything and we were just a little bit behind with the confidence in the feeling of the car, now everything's come right we're starting to put in the times."

It's time to place your bets. Will it be Edwards, or will it be Pryce? All we do know is the Ford Fiesta's four-year reign of the BRC will be over, and the title will go to Wales for a fourth time in five seasons. Beyond that? Let's just enjoy two of Britain's best slugging it out for glory. May the best man win. ■

# LUKE BARRY

**RALLY CORRESPONDENT**

## *"A battle that's too close to call"*

**It's a tough one to call, isn't it? After the Trackrod, I was convinced Matt Edwards had the championship sewn up. That run through Dalby in the dark was absolutely epic and built the foundations for Edwards to record a crushing win over the rest.**

But then Mull happened. Quite how Edwards managed to throw it off so carelessly maybe only he'll know, but it presented Osian Pryce with an opportunity he wasn't going to miss. Having watched the Cambrian onboard, I don't think Edwards could've avoided trouble – he himself said: "I didn't really do anything wrong."

Would Edwards have won without that misdemeanour? Maybe, but talk I've heard that Pryce inherited that victory is triggering. He destroyed Edwards on SS1 on a rally nobody tipped him to win and there's nothing to suggest Pryce couldn't have matched Edwards' impending afternoon charge. He found his confidence at an incisive moment.

Regardless of your favourites, the title climax we have in store is enthralling. However, if Pryce does miss out it'll be hard not to feel for him. Although Edwards has been the quickest driver across the season and some of the misfortune (the Grampian engine problem as well as the Cambrian bump) that's afflicted him wasn't his fault, Pryce's championship management has been second-to-none.

I'm not sure if it's totally fair that he has essentially the same opportunity as Edwards to win the title. That's not to demean Edwards' campaign, but for me consistency should be a massive factor in a championship. Pryce has had two thirds, two seconds and two firsts, yet two of his thirds are basically irrelevant. He's in effect wasted effort – and money – by contesting two rallies and may not even win the title. Perhaps Pryce is just unfortunate that Edwards' capitulations have occurred later in the season where the entry has been thinner.

Edwards would be a totally deserving champion too though, just for the desire he's shown to keep his bid alive if nothing else. His skills as a mechanic have come to the fore on the last two events, and he's done superbly to keep himself in the frame. Several other drivers would have just called it a day. We were all working out the maths in Llandudno last month and assuming Edwards had lost it, but he kept his Polo going and has been rewarded with a shot at glory.

I suspect Edwards will be pushing at 101% and Pryce at 99% on Ulster. Who'll ultimately win? I've spied a particularly comfy fence over there that I intend to sit on...

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FEATURE

# VATANEN WHEN ARI MET RALLY

## *Forty years on from an epic World Rally Championship victory, Andy Hallbery caught up with the popular Finnish winner*

Vatanen sealed title on '81 RAC

**It was 1981 and the fight for the World Rally Championship went to the final round, the RAC Rally – all 65 stages and 450 miles of it. The season boiled down to a battle between points leaders Guy Frequelin/Jean Todt in the Talbot Sunbeam Lotus and chasing were Ari Vatanen/David Richards. It's quite a story as the young Finn won the title.**

To do a Q&A with Vatanen on his career and life would easily fill two copies of this publication. To celebrate the 40th anniversary of his World championship win, we will instead focus on his early beginnings and that 1981 season and its ups and downs.

Our very special thanks to the Royal Automobile Club who held a celebratory dinner for the winning duo, brilliantly hosted by Steve Rider. This is less than half of the chat that night.

There will undoubtedly be a part two to this Q&A, covering Ari's following career, his horrific accident in Argentina that not only nearly cost him his life, but sent him into deep depression, his return to WRC, his amazing successes at Pikes Peak, his time as a European Parliament member, running for the FIA presidency against his 1981 rival Jean Todt. There is an awful a lot still to cover. If you have a question for that, send it in.

For now, let's stick to the beginnings – when Ari met Rally – and 1981, when, as he admits, despite himself Ari Vatanen won the World championship. Strap in!

***Question: What was it that made you want to be a rally driver?***

**Ari Vatanen:** "I will try to be short in my stories. More recently when I was a member of the European Parliament our speeches were limited to two minutes…. But now I can speak freely, and I have a lot of memories.

"In the summer of 1964, when I was 12, the rally came for the first time ever to my home village of Tuupovaara, for me the centre of the world. The rally came at 0200hrs, mid-June, so you can imagine in Finland at that time in mid-June, you have this fantastic summer light. It's not really dark, but it's not full daylight either.

"So when the family went to bed at 2200hrs, I took a bicycle, and I figured out there was a downhill left-hand corner, tightening, and I thought maybe that would catch out some drivers, so I sat there for four hours before the first car came. When the first car, a Volvo 544 with red hot drum brakes, came past kicking up

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

It's 1974, and Vatanen is learning his craft in an Opel

the dust and that fantastic summer light… I was an absolutely captivated 12-year-old boy sitting there on a bank. I'm sure my body stayed on the bank and my spirit went with the car.

"Often people ask me 'When did you think you'd become a rally driver?' I never thought I would. Of course, I was hoping in the back of my mind I could.

"I had beaten Hannu Milkkola by seven seconds in a rally in October 1974, just because I knew the roads and he didn't. It was a non-recce event, and I thought that because of that, all the team managers would start calling me. So, from October 1974 I didn't go to school any more, I thought 'I've done it – that's it!' But for some reason the phone did not ring… I was actually selling books, door to door, and no prospects in rallying and didn't know what to do. I was really down.

"One evening I came from my book-selling tour, and there was a letter waiting for me, a hand-written letter from John Thomas [a young co-driver from Maesteg, Wales], saying 'My name is John Thomas, Gerry Phillips of Motoring News [as this title was then] gave me your address. I've found a local Avon garage in Maesteg for sponsorship. We will give you £300.' My English was quite poor, but I knew enough to understand the numbers! So I put my battered Opel Ascona on a boat and basically that was the start of it. I owe John many thanks for bringing me over.

"Prior to the Welsh Rally I went with Gerry Phillips to a rally in Jamaica. I went from my tiny village in Tuupovaara to Jamaica, and I went to a bar, and David Richards was there with Andy Dawson. David comes over, and my English was quite poor, but he very confidently shakes my hand. 'My name is David Richards and I'm a *professional* co-driver.' At that time I couldn't even dream of becoming a professional driver, yet this young chap was already a professional co-driver!

"One more story… When I went to Jamaica, I didn't actually go back to Finland, I went to London, then to Wales. I was there trying to learn Epynt – lots of sideways in that Ascona, good fun – and Neil Edwards had gone off the road. You know him, famous TV presenter… He was on TV all the time…"

***David Richards: Noel Edmonds?***

**AV:** "Yes! That's it!! Noel Edmonds. Anyway, I was driving alone and a policeman and police lady stopped me. I and I said, 'Me…. Speak … no…. English.' And they said, 'No problem, we speak fluent Welsh,' which didn't help!"

***Question: In 1978 and 1979, Ford stepped back, and in came the late David Sutton Motorsport's privateer team. How big a turning point was that for you?"***

**AV:** "Spirit makes a difference to whatever human beings do, and it's something we all underestimate. The thing about David was he was positive in every sense of the word, almost like a second-hand car salesman, always smiling. Sometimes he would say, 'Ari, I've got a little extra money, let's go and do a rally in Cyprus', or 'let's go to do Rally Madeira…' And if David [Richards] wasn't available we'd take Peter Bryant or Henry Liddon! Just one-off events like that, and I ended up with what feels like 50 different co-drivers, and yet only one wife!

*continued on page 22*

Ari Vatanen drove for the David Sutton Motorsport in a privately entered Ford Escort Mk2 in 1978-1979

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# FEATURE

Shunt in Portugal in 1981 still brings nightmares...

Ari Vatanen and 'The Bear' title rival, Frenchman Guy Frequelin

"But with David, his attitude was to have total confidence in all of us and it is this kind of operation that doesn't exist in this way anymore. What stands out is the spirit, and believing in what you do, and always thinking 'next time it will be better'. That makes a difference."

***Question: When you teamed up with Ford and Rothmans in 1980 you quickly gained a reputation as 'all or nothing'. Is that fair?***

**AV:** "I have to thank Ford, and Rothmans, for their patience… I have always said that driving is like an extension of your character, it's like your handwriting, and it's true that I have thrown some very painful victories out of the window. I don't think today, and I said this to my son Max, who tried to do the same thing 30 years later, I would not have been forgiven for my mistakes today. At that time it was much more tolerable, because people loved it. When you think about it, there were many similarities later with Colin McRae. If you go from success to success however that may sound statistically, but real life is not like that. Everybody knows that the person you follow in a public life, he or she will go up and down. But people can then relate to that themselves.

"After all, let's face it… When you make mistakes and go off the road there are not many other sports where first it can really hurt you as happened to me later in Argentina and I survived miraculously…

"If I was to analyse my own driving, it was the pure pleasure of the driving that took over me. It's not that I want to do fastest… I didn't even think as far as the end of a special stage. I just thought about that corner, the one I'm approaching far too fast, so you have to brake late, flick it and you are in that bubble. It's a universe which is just yours. It's a need to survive. It's just you and your car, like a measured glove in your hand. It's the music of your life. And of course, when you push it to the limit like that then mistakes do happen. But that's been me from day one."

***Question: The 1980 British Rally Championship was where your fan base really grew?***

**AV:** "They were lovely years, those years in Britain. Not only was I learning to drive, but I was like a young guy learning! In a positive sense it was like dropping into the deep end of the world. Everything had novelty, everything was for the first time. It was like being a little boy in wonderland… Wow, wow and wow!

"Just to sum it up, we lived in Chelmsford and one day I came from there to London, and I bought a pair of jeans, and then I went to Berkeley Square and I saw a Mercedes, and everything was so cheap, about a third of Finnish prices! So I wrote in my diary, 'Today I bought jeans and a Mercedes.' That was the kind of life that it was.

"The British fans were so supportive, and even today there's this feeling that you can't put your finger on. It is still a very warm feeling for me."

"In a professional sense, my first World Rally event was in 1976. In 1977 I did more, apart from the 1000 Lakes I also did Portugal with Peter Bryant, and it all came easily. I was leading, then had some punctures, dropped back and climbed up the leaderboard again to the lead. And then I went off the road, *after* the end of the stage. I went through the flying finish, but there was still one more tight corner that I hadn't noticed…

"So I had to wait until 1980 and of course, as I said earlier, Ford, Stuart Turner, Rothmans and David Richards had a lot of patience with me.

"One thing I would like to mention. In a bigger picture it wasn't just David [Richards] and me. It was our families, our wives and families who were behind us. My wife Rita was always hoping the telephone would not ring. Argentina was a little later. She had already lost her first husband in an aircraft accident. She very nearly lost her second husband in Argentina, yet she was still supporting me. Why I say that in relating to 1980, our daughter Ria was born just 10 days prior to the 1980 Acropolis. If somebody deserves a medal, our families do."

***Question: So we come to 1981, and now there's the threat of Audi and the four-wheel-drive Quattro….***

**AV:** "Yes, absolutely. Audi came out and Hannu Mikkola – the late Hannu, a real gentleman – was leading Monte Carlo easily then had something happen. We finished second in Sweden then got to Portugal. We were all staying in the same place, and Hannu said, 'come with me, out in the Quattro…' You can imagine… Going from a rear-wheel-drive Ford Escort to a Quattro with that power, the turbo and especially four-wheel drive – it went like a rocket!

A victory on the Acropolis was a crucial turning point

"I went back to David and said, 'we might as well pack our bags and go home, because we have no chance.'

"Anyway, the rally starts and Henri Toivonen was behind us in the Sunbeam, but of course all the Audis were just driving their own rally. Then one after the other, they retired. And I still remember physically where I saw the last Audi stopped on the stage which was gravel. I was, 'David, David, David. The Audis are all out! We are leading!' And Henri was *five minutes* behind us. The following stage was a Tarmac stage, so we put slicks on. I was so nervous. Come on…. We are leading the World championship.

"The third corner of the stage – and David tells me he still wakes up in the middle of the night remembering it now, and I understand that! – I went off. You cannot imagine how much that hurts. We were still young trying to win the World championship.

"We had a small budget with our little outfit. I was broken, so broken. I'd let the entire little team down. It was quite a long way down from that stage to Estoril where we used to be. We arrived early in the morning and Rita was there. And I still remember being nearly in tears, my heart in my throat having let everybody down, feeling the most stupid guy on earth. I get to the hotel room at 0200hrs, and on the door is a note from Rita, a heart and the words 'Ari, I love you. Together we are strong.'"

***Question: …And presumably David Sutton just shrugged his shoulders and said 'Let's go on to the next one?'***
**AV:** "Yes. I would have deserved to be told off, but I don't remember him saying a word."

***Question: In that 1981 season your main championship rival was Guy Frequelin with Jean Todt in the Talbot Sunbeam Lotus What do you remember about him?***
**AV:** "In France they called him 'L'Ours…. The Bear' because of his size! At that time, we didn't do every single round, and nor did they, and we knew that if I didn't do my silly mistakes we would normally have had him under control, but we had to wait all the way to the RAC. But the 1000 Lakes was the decisive factor in the middle. We went off in Argentina, and in Brazil we won…. Which reminds me…. Before the start of the rally we had a lot of time on Copacabana Beach, and I remember Rita flew from Los Angeles – she was an air hostess – she thought Rio de Janeiro from Los Angeles were next to each other, but not exactly! Anyway she was there and we were watching Princess Diana getting married, and we got to know Jean Todt, because for once he couldn't go anywhere so we had time to chat. Those kind of moments I remember."

***Question: Jean was Guy's co-driver, and your paths crossed many times since, at Peugeot and then at the FIA….***
**AV:** "I asked Jean many years after why we hadn't become friends in 1981. He said 'I am small and I need to protect myself!' Not very many people get close to him. He is extremely well connected and extremely good in making deals and seeing opportunities, and he's an excellent manager. He is fair. He can be tough, and there are many things I've disagreed with him. But I'm one of the few ones who can say 'no' to him because for me he's not just the president he's a long-time rival, long-time friend.

"But if you judge him by the Peugeot Sport mechanics, he was living in a nice house on the sunny side of the Champs-Elysees, yet on a Sunday morning he would deliver croissants to the mechanics who he knew had worked all night. And those mechanics knew if there was any kind of problem, even in their private life, they could go to see Mr Todt and he would listen.

"He knows how to get competent people around him. But you don't go out to have a beer with him! He's not that kind of guy."

***Question: Back to 1981, you were second in Sweden in February, then didn't score again until winning the Acropolis in June…?***
**AV:** "Statistically I'm not very good in Portugal... 1977 was my first Portugal, and the only time I finished was 21 years later in 1998 with Fred Gallagher! Not that I did all of them, but I did most, and I only finished at my very last attempt. However, I still love Portugal!

"Acropolis was 13-odd hours of competitive driving – nothing like the three and a half hours today – and rough roads, so in principle it was not the kind of rally that suited me. Not like 1000 Lakes and smooth road which I could attack like a mad man! But somehow in Acropolis it just suited me and at that time we didn't always know exactly where we stand throughout the night. The internet didn't exist!"

The 1000 Lakes Rally was the Finn's third victory of the 1981 campaign

***Question: As well as being your home event, the 1981 1000 Lakes was an important event for you?***
**AV:** "We got to Finland and David [Richards] said to me 'Now Ari, we are in Finland, this is our chance, we must get the points'. And I said, but no, we must beat Markku Alen! Markku had beaten us every year.

"So the plan was to start fast, or at least

*continued on page 24*

**"I deserved to be told off - but I wasn't"**

**Ari Vatanen**

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# FEATURE

On top of the world: The champs David Richards and Ari Vatanen

The rally legend has had some to reflect on a decorated WRC career

the first few stages, which was us totally fooling ourselves, because I knew it was going to be more than a few! I just wanted to get the better of Markku. On the third stage we had a close shave already, and David says to me 'Ari, please, please think of the World championship, please slow down…' He was being the sensible one. I said to him, 'Please let me do one more stage…'

"That stage went well, and we won the rally and that felt very, very sweet because in all sense we should have slowed down to make sure we had the points. But I have *never* been 'let's go for the points'. Let's go flat out. That's me.

"It was just a pure driving pleasure, and everything else evolved from that. As David says, I'd have been far wiser if I'd been able to look a bit further ahead, but the pure passion takes over your personal sense. And it's stronger than your brain. That's how we all are."

***Question: Guy Frequelin had the chance to clinch the title on the Ivory Coast Rally, which, in turn, is another contrasting event to say the least. You came away with two points at the end of it, Guy with eight. But the trip was such an effort. And just to paint a picture, it's not closed roads or anything like that, there's traffic coming the other way?***

**AV:** "Yes, It's like Safari Rally…"

***Question: …And you basically hit a lorry?***

**AV:** "Yes. All I remember was the smell. It was stinking! There was fish that was half rotten on the back of that lorry and I remember the driver disappearing into the heart of the jungle. The car was very damaged! The windscreen wipers did not work, so we actually got a piece of string that went around and into the cockpit and we were inside trying to use that to clean the windscreen. The clutch packed up, the starter motor didn't work. When we got to service David had to climb out of the window as the door wouldn't open. He said to the team, 'I know we've only got 10 minutes, but can we have it perfect by the time we leave?!'

"It wasn't. We finished ninth, and last, there were only nine finishers, and we were 24 hours behind the winner!"

***Question: That did mean that the 1981 World Rally Championship went to a decider on the RAC Rally, which is how it should be….***

**AV:** "The odds were very simple. In any case we had to finish in the top six, and we had to be in front of Guy. Then he went off the road reasonably early – but even so, we still had to finish.

"Another memory. I told Hannu [Mikkola] before he passed away earlier this year, that that event is still one of the many memories I have of how fair he was. It's true that in competition the worst in human beings comes out when the victory is at stake. But Hannu was never, ever like that. He was so fair, a typical Finnish engineer, straightforward all the time. You could count on him.

"At one point, I was still enjoying the driving on that RAC Rally a bit too much, and some of the roads were icy. We were not threatened, we just had to finish. Hannu was running behind us on the road, and he saw my marks… Nearly into a ditch, nearly into a tree. Hannu was fuming. Before the next stage he came up to me and he still had his helmet on, and he took me by the shoulders and said 'Ari…. You are crazy. If you keep on driving like that, you won't be the champion.' He was so angry with me. That's what a real friend does.

"I also remember one more little detail from that RAC. One morning because the rally was long and the mornings quite cold. I had started the engine, and I still remember it like yesterday, the oil light came on, and stayed on… and on and on and on while the engine was running. I thought 'Oh dear, oh no, please no…' Finally the oil light went off… And we were able to get to the finish.

"I have a picture at home, which is slightly blurred, but it's actually a very fitting picture. At the very end of the last special stage, David Sutton and I hugged each other, and you can't believe the relief on my face… Because I knew in the bottom of my heart that had we not won, all of his efforts, David Richards' efforts the efforts of the team… they would have been thrown out of the window because of my mistakes. I was accountable for everything. And then when I realised that with just the last 50km road section back to Chester, not even I could mess it up anymore! The relief on my face is there in that photo.

"One other thing to remember from that event is that was David's last rally as a co-driver, as he had other ambitions. But when you think about it, it was also Jean Todt's last rally too. Now imagine that,

> ***"I have never been one to just drive for points"***
>
> ***Ari Vatanen***

Ivory Coast in 1981 featured a car versus truck incident...

and look at the careers they have both had since in their own ways. It's just extraordinary, and both absolutely deserve full credit for what they have done since. And I've been very privileged to see and work with both since first-hand."

***Question: You touched on it, but the role of a co-driver doesn't always get the recognition it deserves, does it?***

**AV:** "It's an incredible environment and working between driver and co-driver in a rally car – it's a world on its own. I can't think of any other working relationships like that. You must have the same mental notes, two human beings.

"Drivers are allowed to make a mistake, but the co-driver has a really thankless task. They are supposed to do everything without ever making a mistake. The only time a co-driver's role is noticed is when there is a mistake, however unfair that is.

"Also, us drivers… you can't count on us in the first place. You must remember that. And even when we went to a service halt, we'd have 20 minutes or whatever and David would literally have to say to me, 'Ari you have to be here at 1050hrs,' and David would then point out the closest clock, a local Big Ben if you like, and explain when the hands reach here and there, you need to be back here.

"A good co-driver takes care of absolutely everything. It's much more than just a team effort. And that inspired me because I knew I could just concentrate on driving, and I didn't have to think about anything else. Everything was in order. And I never noticed that anything was undone.

"I will give you an example. On the Sanremo Rally in 1981, once we'd finish the late and tough stages, my reason to focus disappeared, so David drove some of the road sections because otherwise I would fall asleep.

"But it's true. When we came to the end of the Acropolis as winners that year, it felt very, very good. And in those days our families came to the beach, David and I had young children, and we all stayed in these bungalows. That kind of rallying does not exist anymore. It was very much a family affair. It's quite funny to think all of our young children then are approaching 50 now!"

***Question: Finally, your memories of that Acropolis Ford Escort RS1800 – now beautifully restored – that David Sutton Motorsport ran and you steered you and David to the 1981 World title?***

**AV:** "The Escort with the Cosworth BDA engine... It was like a glove in my hand. I cannot stand an understeering car. For me a car has to turn without any hesitation at least to get it turning. If it's understeering you have to take your foot off the throttle. That's all you can do. If it's turning you can floor it and hope for the best!

"People love it when you come out of a corner with a few branches sticking out of the bumper. In fact if you look at any of my rally Escorts both sides of the rear end will have touched something. For me it was like a waltz, with the music playing. The car was moving even if the road wasn't quite wide enough for it… And the BDA engine. That was the music. If there is anybody in a pitch-black forest an Escort with that BDA engine, well, there's no other car which makes that music.

"As the saying goes, the beauty is in the eyes of the beholder. The same is with the music. The rally car music can be in your ears too, and that's what that car does." ■

Mikkola (left), Vatanen and Airikkala (right)

The title finally came on the RAC Rally in 1981

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

PREVIEW: WRC FINALE

# WHEN THE WORLD RALLY BATTLE FIZZLES OUT WITHOUT A BANG

**Graham Lister reflects on some of the most intense WRC nail-biters**

**With 17 points between the World Rally Championship's top two drivers and 30 up for grabs at Rally Monza, starting tomorrow, the odds on seeing a 'title decider to end all title deciders' aren't exactly favourable.**

The sport's current best, Sebastien Ogier, tops the rankings ahead of Toyota factory team-mate Elfyn Evans and isn't exactly known for getting it wrong, making the outcome of the battle to win the final World Rally Championship title of the World Rally Car era a little predictable.

But ,as Motorsport News recalls, there have been some real stinkers over the years when it comes to WRC championship showdowns.

Here, we cast our eye over some that have not delivered, despite the fact they really should have.

Loeb flew high in 2006, from his sofa t home...

### 2006: Loeb wins from his house

Sebastien Loeb was sat on his sofa, 9000 miles away from the action, when he became champion for a third time in 2006. He watched the race for the WRC title peter out on the other side of the world with two events remaining.

Loeb had broken his right arm falling off a bike near his Geneva home that September, ruling himself out of the championship climax and handing Marcus Gronholm a gilt-edged chance to snatch the crown from under the injured Frenchman's nose.

Having won in Turkey, the first event that Loeb missed, the Finn needed just six points from Rally Australia to keep the title fight alive. But an early off restricted him to fifth place and meant that he would ultimately come up short in the final reckoning, despite the Ford man winning the season-closing rounds in New Zealand and Wales.

"It's strange not being in Australia fighting for the race," Loeb said via a satellite video link to the assembled media in Perth. "I woke up at 0400hrs to watch the splits and it was a great moment when I knew I was champion. I sent a text message to Marcus to thank him for the competition. He answered that it was fair and that I deserved this title. He also warned me about next year."

He's human: Gronholm slipped up on Rally GB

### 2007: Gronholm blows hat-trick hopes

It was actually Malcolm Wilson who did the warningin 2007, urging his lead driver, Marcus Gronholm, to take things easy on the slippery Irish roads to give himself the best possible chance of retiring as a three-time, rather than two-time, World champion.

After both Gronholm and chief rival Sebastien Loeb retired in Japan, the Finn arrived in Sligo for the first Rally Ireland four points better off than Loeb.

While his French rival had been strongly tipped to clean up on the event's narrow and bumpy lanes – wins on two practice outings in Donegal and Cork providing perfect preparation time – Gronholm was never truly at ease on sealed-surfaces, particularly in anything other than dry conditions.

Wilson urged Gronholm to play it safe in Ireland, reasoning that fourth place would have been good enough for a final title push on Rally GB two weeks later, where victory on his favoured gravel surface would have made him champion, regardless of how Loeb fared.

Although Gronholm was doing as he was told, a sudden surface change nearing the end of the 12.78-mile Lough Gill test on Friday morning left him crashing out.

It left a bruised and battered Ford driver to return to Finland, while Loeb stayed in Ireland to win with ease in his Citroen to open up a six-point advantage with one round remaining.

Needing a fifth-place finish in Wales to secure a fourth crown, Loeb drove with caution throughout, netting only one stage win and finishing more than 90 seconds behind overall winner Mikko Hirvonen to beat Gronholm to the title by four points.

### 1986: Kankkunen triumphs after the dust settles

Two decades and a year before Gronholm's farewell title failure, Juha Kankkunen took the first of his four World championships two weeks after the curtain came down on a turbulent and tragic 1986 season.

For 11 days, Markku Alen – whose Lancia team-mates Henri Toivonen and Sergio Cresto had been killed in a terrible inferno on Tour de Corse back in May – was champion for the first time. Then the governing body, FISA, decided that he wasn't.

It had declared the results of the Sanremo Rallye null and void after overruling local scrutineers who had determined the side skirts on the Peugeot 208 T16s were illegal. Alen, who won the event in a Delta S4, lost the 20 points he'd seemingly secured and with it the World crown, something he'd never win again.

Alen became the WRC's shortest reigning World champion

Photos: mckien-imagedatabase.com

Salonen won the title in the way he drove: without much fuss

### 1985: Salonen champion with three months remaining

Take nothing away from Timo Salonen, whose first and only World title in 1985 was more than deserved after the chain-smoking, spectacle-wearing Finn became champion by winning five rounds out of nine, including four on the bounce.

The problem, as far as pretty much everybody else was concerned, was the last of that dominant winning sequence, on Rally Finland no less, made him champion. And the reason why it was such a problem was the action in Jyvaskyla ended on August 25, while the season-closing Rally GB wasn't scheduled to finish until November 28.

Of course, things could have been different if Salonen's Peugeot team-mate Ari Vatanen's winning start to the season had continued beyond the first two rounds, or, more significantly, had he not been seriously injured in a monster crash on Rally Argentina.

The fact is back in 1985, the era of surface specialists and specialist cars, few drivers mounted sustained campaigns, meaning only a handful would turn up on a regular basis. Salonen's attendance record, however, was exemplary, making the title somewhat of a formality.

Volkswagen was new, but its driver took the most from it

### 2013: Ogier goes unchallenged for first title

With Sebastien Loeb, the best driver in the world in 2013, calling it quits on his full-time career after winning the Monte and coming second in Sweden, the second best driver at the time but in the best car, Sebastien Ogier, would essentially take his first title largely unchallenged.

Driving the all-conquering, big-budget Volkswagen Polo, Ogier won nine out of 13 rounds and wrapped up the World championship on Rally France – with two rounds to spare.

With a 114-point margin over Thierry Neuville, Ogier was sublime. As a contest, however, the 2013 season was lacking considerably and things didn't get much better for the next three seasons with Ogier and Volkswagen winning at a canter and settling the score ahead of schedule each year.

### 2019: Bushfires stop play in Oz

While the drivers' title had been decided in Ott Tanak's favour on the previous round in Spain, the battle for the 2019 makes' award was between Hyundai and Tanak's then-employer, Toyota, on Rally Australia.

With bushfires not only intensifying but proving more and more devastating, plans for a shortened route to keep the event running were ill-judged. But sense eventually prevailed and the rally was axed, leaving Hyundai to claim its first World title by 18 points without a wheel being turned in anger.

Tanak's first title came with a whimper after Rally Australia's axe

## THE WINNERS

### Final rallies

Waldegard on '79 Ivory Coast

| YEAR | VENUE | WINNING DRIVER (NAT) |
|---|---|---|
| 1979 | Ivory Coast | Bjorn Waldegard (SWE) |
| 1980 | Ivory Coast | Walter Rohrl (GER) |
| 1981 | GB | Ari Vatanen (FIN) |
| 1982 | GB | Walter Rohrl (GER) |
| 1983 | GB | Hannu Mikkola (FIN) |
| 1984 | GB | Stig Blomqvist (SWE) |
| 1985 | GB | Henri Toivonen (FIN) |
| 1986 | USA | Juha Kankkunen (FIN) |
| 1987 | GB | Juha Kankkunen (FIN) |
| 1988 | GB | Miki Biasion (ITA) |
| 1989 | GB | Miki Biasion (ITA) |
| 1990 | GB | Carlos Sainz (ESP) |
| 1991 | GB | Juha Kankkunen (FIN) |
| 1992 | GB | Carlos Sainz (ESP) |
| 1993 | GB | Juha Kankkunen (FIN) |
| 1994 | GB | Didier Auriol (FRA) |
| 1995 | GB | Colin McRae (GBR) |
| 1996 | Spain | Tommi Makinen (FIN) |
| 1997 | GB | Tommi Makinen (FIN) |
| 1998 | GB | Tommi Makinen (FIN) |
| 1999 | GB | Tommi Makinen (FIN) |
| 2000 | GB | Marcus Gronholm (FIN) |
| 2001 | GB | Richard Burns (GBR) |
| 2002 | GB | Marcus Gronholm (FIN) |
| 2003 | GB | Petter Solberg (NOR) |
| 2004 | Australia | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2005 | Australia | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2006 | GB | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2007 | GB | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2008 | GB | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2009 | GB | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2010 | GB | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2011 | GB | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2012 | Spain | Sebastien Loeb (FRA) |
| 2013 | GB | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |
| 2014 | GB | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |
| 2015 | GB | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |
| 2016 | Australia | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |
| 2017 | Australia | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |
| 2018 | Australia | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |
| 2019 | Australia | Ott Tanak (EST) |
| 2020 | Monza | Sebastien Ogier (FRA) |

Ogier's 2020 glory at Monza

## THE 10 OF THE BEST

While some World Rally Championship title deciders have failed to deliver over the years, plenty did as the following proves

### 1 1998: Makinen's agony – and then the ecstasy

Carlos Sainz was seemingly on course to win the 1998 World Rally Championship on the RAC Rally. Tommi Makinen had crashed his Mitsubishi on day one – on a patch of oil dropped by another car – and Sainz was 300 metres from the finish of the final stage in Margam Park when his Toyota's engine failed, handing the title to Makinen. Sainz's co-driver Luis Moya responded by throwing his crash helmet through the rear windscreen of the stricken Corolla.

### 2 1995: McRae beats Sainz for home glory

Colin McRae not only beat Subaru team-mate Sainz to victory on the RAC Rally, he also scored his first World title to deny the Spaniard his third after an arduous final round. The celebrations at Chester Racecourse remain the stuff of legend.

### 3 1997: One point denies McRae the crown...

McRae couldn't have done more on the 1997 RAC Rally in his pursuit of World championship number two. He won the event – this third in succession that season – but Tommi Makinen, who finished sixth, pipped him to top honours by a single point.

### 4 2001: ... So does Rally GB crash

The battle of the Brits – and the 2001 WRC title – went to Richard Burns by two points ahead of McRae after the Scot crashed out leaving his Subaru-driving rival to prosper in the best way possible.

### 5 2011: Every stage best counts for Breen

With Gareth Roberts co-driving, Craig Breen not only had to top the WRC Academy order on Rally GB in 2011 to take the title, he also had to score as many point-paying stage wins as possible and hope his rival Egon Kaur was slower than he. They tied on points but Breen became champion courtesy of stages won.

### 6 2003: The World title Loeb didn't win

After Carlos Sainz crashed out, Petter Solberg held on to beat Sebastien Loeb to the 2003 honours, albeit by a single point. While it was the then Subaru driver's first and only World crown, Loeb would go on to claim the World Rally Championship for the next nine seasons consecutively.

### 7 2018: Ogier champion as rivals falter

Ogier came out on top of a three-way fight for the WRC's top award in 2018 after Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak both retired.

### 8 1981: Privateer Vatanen victorious

Once Guy Frequelin had stopped, Ari Vatanen took the 1981 World Rally Championship in a Ford Escort Mk2 run by David Sutton's privateer team. The next private outfit to land rallying's top prize was Kronos Racing, the outfit behind Sebastien Loeb's 2006 title win.

### 9 1992: It all comes good for King Carlos Sainz

Having lost out on the 1991 title to Juha Kankkunen by seven points on the RAC Rally, Carlos Sainz went one better in 1992 for his second World crown. The Spaniard's triumph owed plenty to rivals Kankkunen and Didier Auriol hitting trouble.

### 10 1979: Waldegard's unnecessary stress

Bjorn Waldegard won the first WRC drivers' crown in 1979 by a single point ahead of Hannu Mikkola. However, Swede Waldegard was adamant that the battle should never have been as close, had it not been for spectators blocking his path on the final night of the season-opening Monte Carlo Rally by placing objects in the road, to deny him victory and hand first place to Bernard Darniche instead.

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

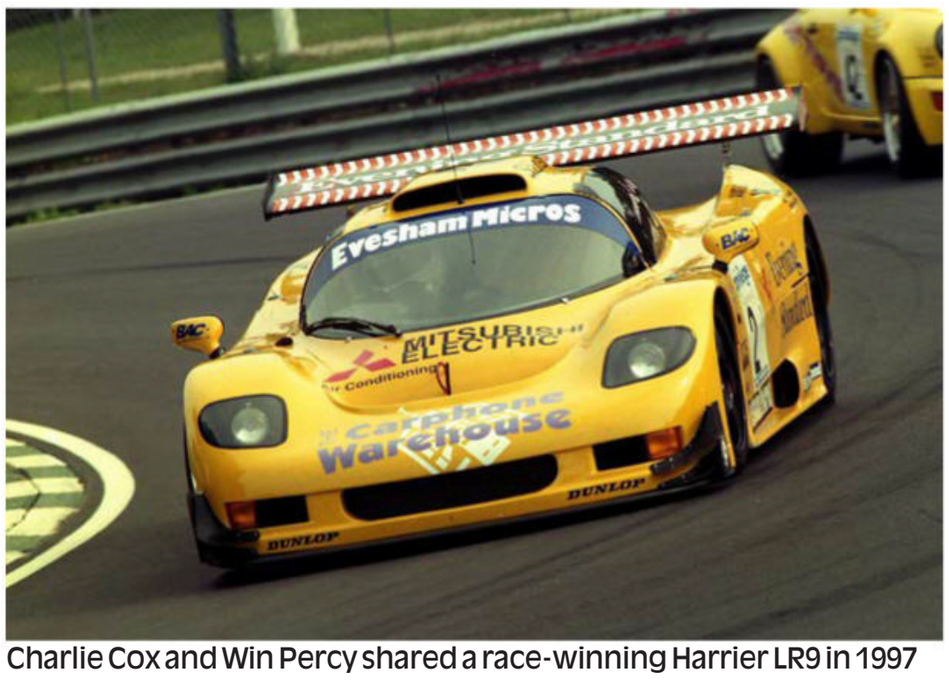
INSIGHT: BRITISH GT

# HOW SPORTSCARS WEATHERED THE GT STORM IN THE UK

## *British GT is on the crest of a wave: David Addison finds out how it got there*

Jonny Cocker leads a threadbare British GT field sway in 2004

John Greasley's Porsche 935K3 was the starting point for British GT



Charlie Cox and Win Percy shared a race-winning Harrier LR9 in 1997

**The British GT championship has once again provided a year full of dramatic racing. Season after season a quality entry does battle across the classes and it is a rare season when the GT3 title doesn't go down to the wire.**

Indeed, it is now becoming one of the elder statesmen of the national GT arena and one of the longer running British championships. With top teams and drivers it is tempting to forget that the series has had one or two bumps along the way as well as some remarkable cars and characters.

It all began in 1993 and credit must go to the then-BRDC competitions manager Chris Norman and his team. The BRDC used to be a race organiser, of high standards, as well as a championship organiser. Norman always had an eye on what was happening internationally and tried to echo that in the UK, such as Group C2 (which didn't quite work as hoped) and Group N saloon car racing which assuredly did. With Group C having died, there was talk of GT racing being the next avenue and Norman decided that those were the cars that the UK teams and drivers had a better chance of owning and running compared to C2. It was a slow burn, though, as a grid of purely Porsches kicked off the category at Donington in April 1993. John Greasley and Ross Hyett drove the Blue Coral-backed Porsche 935K3s that arch-Porsche enthusiast Greasley had in his stable against a number of cars that were entered for other races that weekend, but a grid was assembled. Norman suggested that the 935s made friends and a really good race was the result, Greasley and Hyett driving within their cars' potential until the end. The National Sports GT Challenge was up and running.

The hardest part initially was getting cars as, although the GT movement was building thanks to the BPR Global GT Series on the continent, there weren't many second hand cars for privateers in the UK. To boost the grids, Escort Cosworths, so prolific in Group N, were allowed out for a second race but, bit-by-bit, the entries improved and so did the quality of teams and drivers within. Hugh Chamberlain ran a brace of Lotus Esprits for the loquacious Dane Thorkild Thyrring (who had been part of the UK fabric from his Sports 2000 days) and Andreas Fuchs, while Martin Donnelly had a guest outing at Silverstone. Sponsors started to take an interest as well: in came Computacenter that backed a brace of Marcos LM500s and Chris Hodgetts (who had made a good name for himself in BRDC C2 with Tim Harvey) took the 1995 title.

By 1996, the championship was looking good. Grids were increasing and the cars were proper: for example, Jake Ulrich arrived with his McLaren F1 GTR, sharing with the redoubtable Ian Flux who was also winning regularly in the TVR Tuscan Challenge. It was the emergence of ProAm racing in a sense: Ulrich was an amateur who didn't have Fluxie's speed nor experience. He made errors and it put the onus on Flux to do the hard yards but it made for great racing. They only took one win together in each of 1996 and 1997 but consistency at least helped the Anglo-American combo to the 1996 GT1 class title. There was also a cameo in 1996 from French veteran Marc Sourd.

The massively experienced Frenchman rocked up for a trio of races with his Renault Spider V6 (a closed Spider…) and won at Donington before a second and a ninth came at Thruxton and Snetterton. After that, Sourd went home and wasn't seen again, sadly.

The flipside of the championship in the late 1990s was that as it grew in popularity, so lots of people wanted to enter and the class structure allowed for smaller-engined sports cars. Now dubbed GT1, GT2 and GT3 (not to be confused with current GT3), it was Ken Thompson's Darrian T90 from the GT3 class that won the 1996 title, trumping the McLaren and Porsches as it did so. The championship needed the supercars, the wow factor and you wouldn't get those if they were being beaten by low-volume sportscars.

Jonny Adam has four GT titles

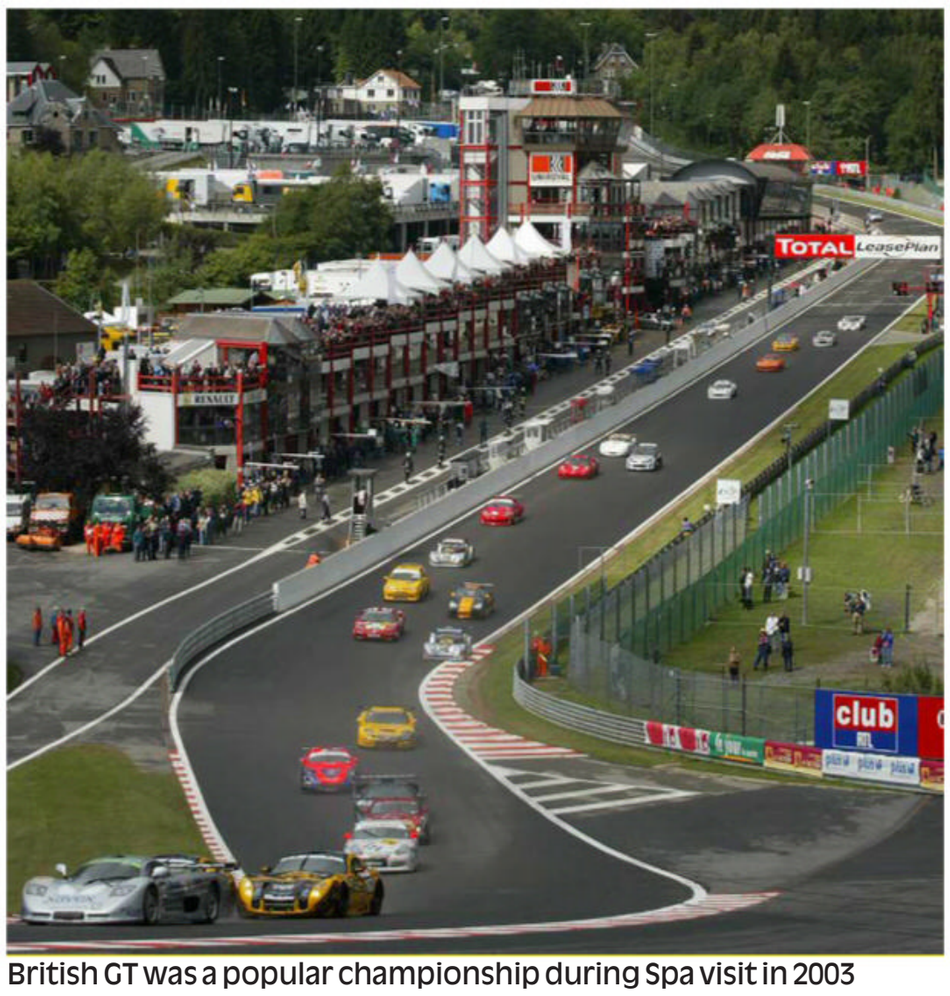
**'Cheifs knew it needed the wow factor'**

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins, Motorsport Images

Dave Clark and John Clelend's Viper in 2000

Magnus Wallinder and John Greasley celebrate in 1998

Boyzone superstar Shane Lynch was a major name in 2001-2003



British GT was a popular championship during Spa visit in 2003

David and Godfrey Jones took the British title in an Ascari in 2009

In 1998, the championship had one of the best GT soundtracks, that of a Chrysler Viper, but attached to it was quite a story. Kurt Luby and Richard Dean had signed up to drive chassis C3, an ex-ORECA car, for club racer Gene Gibson and his Orion Motorsport team. At the end of March, Gibson was arrested along with his pilot for being found in possession of £5 million worth of cocaine in his private plane. Gibson was sentenced to 25 years in prison, but Luby and Dean found themselves in limbo. Over the hill rode American enthusiast Gordy Oftedahl who rescued the deal and Luby and Dean won the championship. There was a change of chassis mid-season, chassis C6 being the second car that took them to the crown and then in the final round it caught fire. It seemed to sum up their season…

A year later there was more intrigue when James Munroe (aka James Cox) arrived on the scene with a longtail McLaren shared with Chris Goodwin. It turned out that the whole enterprise was funded by taking £2.8m from his employers McGraw Hill without their knowledge. Munroe/Cox got five years…

Against the wrong 'uns, there was plenty to cheer about including a support race slot at the British Grand Prix and a constant upswing in entries and quality. Then, in 2000, the championship became one of the three core championships in PowerTour, an aim to take existing strong BRDC race meetings that worked well at Silverstone to other venues. Silverstone's marketing team saw that with an event sponsor, manufacturer or commercially backed championships and a bit of promotion and ticket deals you would get a crowd. So, if that happens at Silverstone, why not at Thruxton, for example? For myriad reasons, many political, PowerTour didn't work financially but the shot in the arm for British GT was another important one as Calum Lockie took the title in Cor Euser's Marcos LM600 against the Lister Storm of David Warnock/Julian Bailey and the omnipotent TVR Cerbera Speed 12 of Ian McKellar and Bobby Verdon-Roe. There was the second class, GTO (for GT Ordinary!), which was Porsche and Marcos-dominated, Mike Jordan and Mark Sumpter being the Porsche pair to beat.

One highlight of that era came in 2001 when PowerTour, and thus BGT, went to Castle Combe. The circuit couldn't boast plush garages for the teams and the pitlane was… homely, but it was like the Wiltshire Grand Prix. A huge crowd poured in to see categories that fans hadn't anticipated at Combe before and it was a huge hit. If you could have bottled the feel-good factor that weekend, you'd have been a millionaire.

But by 2003 grids were waning. The cars were becoming more expensive and with PowerTour no more, the series had lost identity and profile. A core group of drivers and teams kept the series going, but something needed doing. The BRDC had effectively relinquished its organisation of the championship to BMP, British Motorsport Promoters, an organisation of the circuits that held the rights to BGT as well as the BTCC and BSB. Truth be told, it wasn't interested and something needed doing to keep the championship alive. BMP chairman Robert Fearnall knew the answer. It was a Frenchman with an office in London. It was Stephane Ratel.

Fearnall had dealt with Ratel over BPR and FIA GT events at Donington and they had a good relationship. Ratel was offered British GT and he agreed, asking for F3 as well to build a package. Ratel launched his vision to the teams in his Old Brompton Road offices in late 2003 and interest boomed. He had a clear vision: two one-hour races in a weekend and some of the grid-filling cars would have to go. Farewell Volkswagen Golf GTI and Alfa Romeo GTV for example, and hello more Porsches, Ferrari 360 Modenas and Chevrolets. Grids were busy and young gun Jonny Cocker took the title but as the championship took a step up, so did costs. That meant that during 2006, grids dropped again, especially in GT2 where Scuderia Ecosse and its Ferraris were taking on the Panoz of Team LNT. For selected races, GT3 was introduced and won in its first season by Leo Machitski, who since then has been a regular name on SRO entry lists.

Come 2008, entries were streamlined as GT3 and GT4 were the two divisions just as now. It gave BGT two internationally recognised sets of rules allowing teams to drop in to the British series or try their luck abroad if they wished. The Jones brothers, David and Godfrey, had been loyal BGT servants and took the title in 2009 in their Ascari, before David Ashburn (Porsche) rounded out the decade as GT3 champion. GT4 though was struggling and a SuperSport class was introduced, as in international GT40 for low-volume makes such as the KTM X-Bow, before GTC replaced it catering for older or one-make GT cars.

GT3 and GT4 were booming into the next decade, which marked the Jonny Adam rout of titles and Phil Keen's run of race wins. In came the BMW Z4, Aston Martin's V12 Vantage and the Bentley Continental, all raising the profile and standing of the championship. With teams like Team Parker Racing and Barwell Motorsport taking BGT titles and then winning on the international stage, it underlined how competitive BGT had become. More milestones came in 2016 when Adam became the first driver to win back-to-back titles and 2017 when Rick Parfitt added a GT3 crown to this GT4 success. In 2018, BGT boasted its first female champion, Flick Haigh and in 2019 held its 300th race.

Now, it boasts live-streamed television coverage of every round, a mix of race lengths and a calendar that includes Silverstone and Spa as its showpiece venues. That Spa connection dates back to the 1990s and the BRDC's association with the RAC Spa, now continued by SRO.

The championship has come a long way since those early days of somewhat hotch-potch grids but BGT has stood whatever has been thrown at it and survived. With GT racing looking so strong around the globe, it should continue to do so for many years to come. ■

GT3 was becoming firmly established by the 2016 British GT season

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

FEATURE

# INCREMENTAL

## British rallying has joined the sustainability conversation, writes Nick Garton

Environmental concerns are a major factor in rally planning

**Take a deep breath, everyone. It's time to talk about the dread word of these times and the greatest threat to our sport's existence: sustainability. The headlines are dominated by it at World championship level, but even at the grassroots of British rallying, 'sustainability' is changing the sport forever – and hopefully for the better.**

The western world is informed daily by the forces of political legislation, media coverage and Twitter that cars are the biggest cause of climate change on the planet. This prevailing logic decrees that commuting, doing the school run and even driving across the country to check on a vulnerable relative are an unacceptable carbon cost. Meanwhile 'driving in circles', as motorsport is often referred to, is increasingly demonised.

Recently, COP26 provided yet another opportunity to hammer home the message that we are killing the planet with cars. Volkswagen, Toyota, Renault-Nissan and Hyundai-Kia were publicly vilified for refusing to sign a COP26 commitment to produce only zero tailpipe emissions vehicles by 2035. Despite the outcry, their logic for taking this stand was simple: the world's electricity supply is not clean enough to warrant the change, nor is it likely to be by 2035.

Such logic is heresy in the eyes of the sustainability movement until you consider that cars are not, in fact, the biggest threat to the survival of the planet. Collectively, all powered transport on land, sea and air actually constitutes just 16% of global man-made emissions each year. Road transport is indeed the biggest contributor, but even its emissions are around half of those currently produced by generating electricity.

Only 1% of all the vehicles worldwide are currently electric but, if that burden increases, more electricity will need to be generated and the carbon cost will rise. In fact, the United Nations Climate Panel calculates that if all electric motoring targets being pledged by politicians are achieved, they will reduce global temperatures by just one ten-thousandth of a degree Celsius. Meanwhile, the price and the practical limitations of electric cars represent insurmountable obstacles to mobility for millions of people.

It is conundrums of this kind that make a complex path towards enlightenment, and nowhere more so than grassroots motorsport. Indeed, when asked by Motorsport News to discuss the subject, neither the FIA nor Motorsport UK was able to do so.

In their defence, the priority that our sport's leadership places on sustainability is commendably clear. Only last month, MSUK announced that it had become a signatory to the United Nations Sports for Climate Action Framework, about which the governing body's CEO Hugh Chambers said:

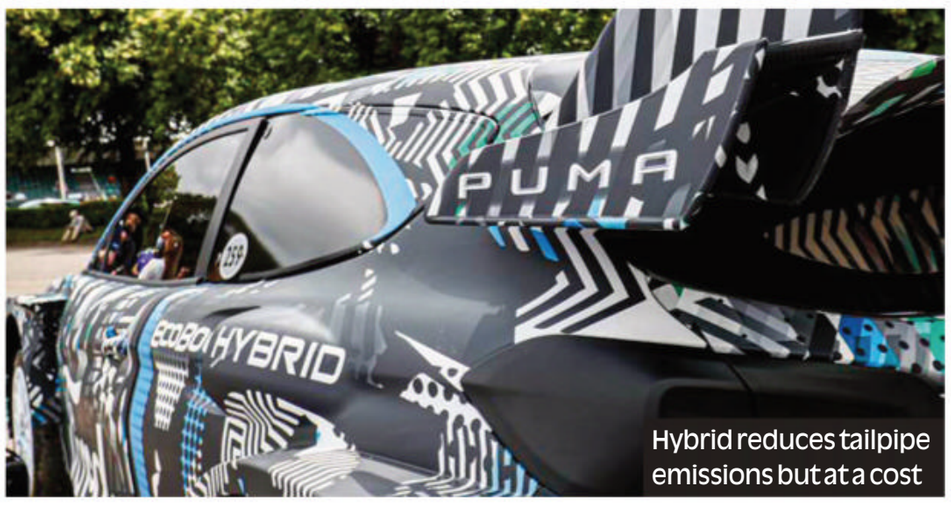
"We have spent a lot of time this year carefully creating a comprehensive strategy with a roadmap containing over 50 objectives up to 2030 aimed at creating a sustainable future for UK motorsport. An important part in building our strategy was benchmarking what other sporting federations are doing around the world and ensuring we are aligned with global best practice."

This was doubtless a sobering process to have gone through, because every sport has a colossal carbon footprint. When all of the contributors are factored in, such as travel, event catering or the construction and maintenance of venues, the total is astronomic. The forthcoming FIFA World Cup in Qatar is conservatively predicted to reach a total of 3.5 million tons of carbon emissions. This figure is dwarfed by the last Olympic Games to which international fans could travel, the 2016 Rio Olympics, which measured 4.4 million tons.

Crowds represent the biggest carbon cost at every sports event

Logistics create colossal carbon

Motorsport is, on the surface of things, a comparative lightweight. In 2018, F1 audited itself and came up with a total of 254,000 tons of carbon emissions per season. This may sound like an absolute environmental bargain next to the World Cup, but the figures themselves only relate to the teams, administration and supply network required to build, transport and run 20 F1 cars. They do not factor in the cost of running each of the events on the calendar, which was estimated to have added a further 1.7 million tons of emissions to F1's account in 2018 and will grow in line with the calendar. Nor indeed was the environmental impact of the support races which travelled with F1 through the season, the live entertainment, hospitality corps or merchandising factored in.




Hybrid reduces tailpipe emissions but at a cost

Only when all sports audit their data transparently will we ever get a clear picture. For example, most travelling football fans use scheduled flights and catch trains, buses and taxis that would have been running anyway, so how are these emissions their responsibility? Conversely, claims of being within sight of, or even having reached, so-called 'carbon neutrality' by some motorsport series may not stand up to rigorous independent assessment.

Rather than finger-wagging, however, let's look at what's being done. In motorsport, this hinges around the introduction of hybrid powertrains and the adoption of biofuels, which began at Le Mans, migrated to F1 and from next year will also be fundamental to the World Rally Championship. These are important developments with phenomenal engineering behind them but there is a basic trade-off in terms of the additional mass and physical bulk that the hybrid cars must carry.

For F1, this means that in 2022 the cars will be consuming sustainable biofuel at a rate of around 3.8-3.9 miles per gallon, which is on par with the fuel mileage of 3.5-litre V10 and V12-engined cars from 30 years ago – although running the cars is the smallest part of F1's carbon footprint, measuring just 0.7% throughout the season. In rallying terms, Toyota's WRC technical director Tom Fowler recently stated that the extra 8% of heft in their hybrid Rally1 test car showed that "you need to accelerate and decelerate more often" in slippery conditions: in other words, their competitive MPG is going to suffer in order for the cars to run without tailpipe emissions in the service park.

An additional factor for rallying is the impact on the stages themselves, requiring much more post-event repair work and thereby incurring even more emissions. This is unavoidable but it is also a cost

**"It is under the radar... tyres make a valuable contribution"**

**Mike Broad**

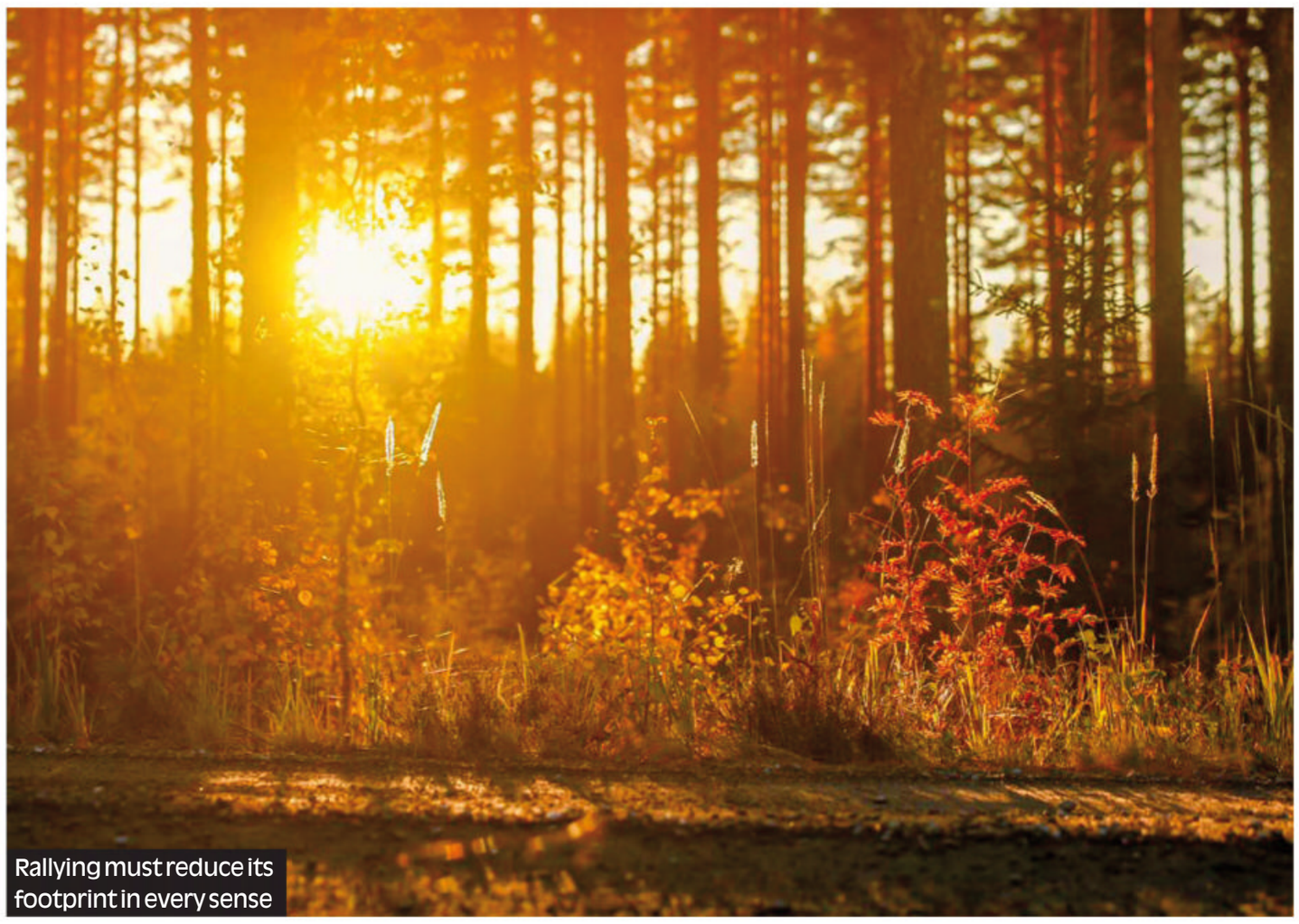
Photos: Motorsport Images, mcklein-imagedatabse.com

Mull Rally sequestered 134 tons of emissions

'Green' F1 will achieve the same MPG in 2022 as in the V10/V12 era

# ENVIRONMENTALISM

British rallying has gained from adopting less damaging rubber



Rallying must reduce its footprint in every sense

worth paying because protecting these environments is no less significant a part of ensuring the sustainability of the sport than cutting tailpipe emissions. One WRC rally official that MN spoke to stated that for now the priority is on getting service parks ready for the hybrid era and marshals trained to deal with the new technology, but once the cars are running the agenda will swiftly move towards repairing the road surface.

The forestry commissions in Wales and Scotland, and the Parliaments to which they answer, have made clear their intent to conserve natural resources and use them to contribute towards our national sustainability. Allowing hundreds of rally cars to chew up their delicate ecosystem would therefore seem contradictory, were it not for the measures already being put in place.

"I'm chair of the Rally Tyre Group now," says Mike Broad, president of the BTRDA. "The idea was that we take the FIA's regulations for tyres, including closed patterns etc, and get rid of the open pattern tyre. They are more expensive, but they will do four or five times the competitive mileage. Forestry organisations now understand that the tyres we use are considerably less damaging than those we used to have 10 years ago. There are competitors who would prefer that we hadn't done that, who complain that they can't get their cars to turn-in, but it's the same for everyone and there is a bigger picture."

While the sport's upper echelons pursue sustainability through big-budget projects like hybridisation, the role that the sport's grassroots must play is equally important. The increments may be smaller, but the combined difference can be profound. "I'd love to see a time where you have a 45-mile event, as most British gravel rounds are, with one set of tyres and two spares – which is what the WRC is already doing," adds Broad.

"While it's under the radar compared with, say, running electric cars, tyres make a valuable contribution to sustainability. I spoke with the Welsh Forestry people on the Nicky Grist Stages this year, and obviously there being no spectators was a bonus for them, if not for the sport. But when I said that there no were chase cars, they immediately said: 'so, you're saving fuel and saving tyres – that's good!' I didn't need to explain it and they were very impressed by steps like that."

This is not to say that British rallying is thinking small. The introduction of biofuels is high on the agenda, with the introduction of hybrid and/or electric rally classes to British series following soon afterwards. Unlike manufacturer-backed F1 and WRC programmes, however, the burden of cost to implement these changes at a domestic level will fall upon the competitor, which inevitably slows the process down.

In the interim, some events and even individual competitors in British rallying have taken matters into their own hands by investing in carbon offsetting – in other words planting trees to compensate for their emissions. In Mull, this meant planting sufficient trees to sequester 136 tonnes (134 tons) of emissions incurred by travel to and from the island as well as the competing cars and roving fans and officials on the event.

"This is just the beginning of our journey to ring fence – from an environmental perspective – the future of the event," said clerk of the course, Andy Jardine.

"Every year the rally runs, we have a team of volunteers and officials who go around the route to check we're leaving the highways and byways of Mull as we found them. Now we're doing the same with the environment. And, crucially, we're working locally to deliver on that policy."

For the time being, however, the sport needs to focus on building up those incremental gains and working with concerned bodies such as the forestry guardians to showcase the value of the work done.

Whether it is ensuring that there are clearly marked recycling bins in the service park or wholesale changes to the fuels used, that sense of people looking for opportunities to improve is all-important.

"I would love it if we could get to the point where we could enforce a blanket ban on chase cars and management cars on events, but we need to be clear on how that can be achieved," says Broad. "One argument against it from competitors is that they need fuel bringing to them because they've fitted smaller fuel tanks – which is stupid. My reaction to that is: 'put the bigger tank back in again!'"

Bold proclamations may be the choice of many, but it really is the little things that matter. COP26 has shown that there is no silver bullet to solving humanity's sustainability quandary at any level. The onus falls upon us all, particularly 'expendable' activities like motorsport, to chip away by every means possible. ■

Advertising enquiries: 01732 446757

FEATURE

GB3 ended 2021 on a high with 21 cars

# MOTORSPORT'S TEAM GB GOES FOR GOLD

## *Jonathan Palmer tells Graham Keilloh how GB3 hasn't missed a beat since getting its new name, and how the GB4 championship will provide new opportunities for young talent*

Palmer wants driving talent with modest means to get a chance

**What a difference a year makes. Or even four months. Back in July, had MN mentioned the 'GB3 championship' you probably would have thought it was a typo, referring to the former name of the Formula 1 weekend support.**

Not now, as the GB3 championship is established on the UK junior single-seater scene. In early August it was announced that the BRDC British Formula 3 championship was being renamed thus, as the FIA wanted the F3 name solely for its own use.

And even though BRDC F3's lineage didn't lead directly to the British F3 of Ayrton Senna, Mika Hakkinen et al, the name's heritage value was undeniable.

"This is why we hung onto it so hard because the heritage of British F3 is enormous," Jonathan Palmer, chief executive of GB3 organiser MotorSport Vision, tells Motorsport News, "and I didn't agree and I don't agree now with the FIA's insistence that only the international FIA championships use the name, but ultimately they are the world governing body and we're not in a position to fight them on that. In the interest of harmony of everything we agreed to change the name."

Further MSV had established BRDC F3 from its BRDC Formula 4 predecessor after relinquishing to the FIA the UK right to the F4 title, MSV hoping in return to run a FIA northern European regional F3 championship that didn't arrive.

"But nevertheless, we've moved on from that," Palmer says of the name change. "It's a great shame that we lost the heritage from British F3 but nevertheless were creating rapidly our own heritage already with GB3.

"We created what has been a very good car for [BRDC F3] by taking the FIA F4 Tatuus core and running a different engine, more downforce, we've taken that platform and put it on steroids in every direction, whether it's engine, gearbox, brakes, aerodynamics and it's proven to be a superb race car."

As for proof of the category's driver pudding, this year's top two Zak O'Sullivan and Ayrton Simmons seek FIA F3 drives for 2022 while Ollie Bearman – who sampled three GB3 rounds this year – continues to reach for the stars. Eight GB3 graduates took part in the recent FIA F3 end-of-season test, 2019 champion Clement Novalak has just moved into Formula 2 while Lando Norris, George Russell and Colton Herta also sampled the championship.

"It's morphed very seamlessly from British F3 into GB3," Palmer insists, and his view is backed by the 21 cars racing in last month's Donington Park season-closer, its biggest turnout since 2016. "So it hasn't impacted it at all," he notes, "people have got used to it very quickly."

Team bosses concur. "A name's just a name isn't it?," Hitech Grand Prix head Oliver Oakes told MN shortly after the change. "The series now's got its own legacy from the past few years. For me as Hitech this series is important because it's bringing drivers through to our [FIA] F3 and F2 teams and I believe a lot in the British racing just simply because you've got to drive in the wet, dry [and] they get a lot of testing.

"Drivers like this series because they love the car, they love the format and I don't think many really have focused on the name. It's the main series in England for young drivers to get spotted in.

"I don't see any [drop in interest from the name change], if anything it's been announced and the last two days we've had lots of inquiries. The fundamentals of the series are still good definitely."

Fortec boss Ollie Dutton added presciently: "I think people will talk about it [the name change] for a couple of days or a week and then it will be forgotten about it.

"It's still a fantastic car and a strong grid, we're still excited about its future, we know it's going to be a strong championship moving forward."

Douglas Motorsport boss Wayne Douglas muses: "Bearman, he still

> ***"Britain can become the place to come"***
>
> ***Jonathan Palmer***

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

GB3 gets a power and aerо upgrade for 2022

GB4 is arriving for 2022 as low-budget option

# PRIVATE SOLDIERS GOING INTO BATTLE

Jonathan Palmer's desire to bring the privateer to GB4 looks to be happening, as two Formula Ford squads, Kevin Mills Racing and Oldfield Motorsport, intend to join 2022's inaugural season.

Kevin Mills tells Motorsport News: "Anything that Jonathan Palmer is involved with usually is a success. It's on a really good package and with all the ideas they're bringing to keep the budgets at a sensible amount that maybe the higher-funded Formula Ford drivers could do.

"The country's lacking a wings-and-slicks formula that is a bit more sensible in the budget; F4 is just out of control. I've had quite a bit of [driver] interest [for GB4]."

James Oldfield of Oldfield Motorsport takes a similar view: "I've waited for a couple of years for something to come along," he tells MN, "I wasn't prepared to step up into British F4 or British F3, whereas GB4 fits the market perfectly between Formula Ford and F3 where you can do something on a realistic budget.

"F4, I've worked in it with Arden so I know what the costs are, and to those kids' mums and dads it's a very small niche market. GB4 offers something quite different. I'd like to expand my business, finally I can."

Oldfield is one of two FF1600 teams set to step up into GB4

sees the value in it and he's lots of opportunities in Europe, he could be doing FREC [Formula Regional European Championship] races, he could be doing Euroformula races, he's decided to come and do this.

"It's very difficult for someone, be it budget wise or be it talent wise or result wise, to jump from an F4 British championship to [FREC] Alpine or to FIA F3, so there has to be some kind of championships somewhere in between. FREC Alpine still has pretty limited testing, so one of the things [about doing GB3 is] doing the laps to get up to speed."

It seems further that there are positives from being called GB3. "It's a very crisp name isn't it?," Palmer notes. "It's very short, GB3 really is easy, the logo looks good, looks good on the cars, people have got to know it quickly. They like it, teams like it, drivers like it."

Arden boss Gary Ward adds: "It locks it in a bit more exclusive to Jonathan who's put together a really good championship. And as long as we don't steer away from there I think we'll be fine."

Palmer continues: "Also there's no doubt that operating outside of directly controlled FIA championships, clearly they have benefits of being part of the FIA system but that can also mean an individual country doesn't have the ability to change and tweak regulations as easily."

Even the change happening mid-year is considered a plus. "It's better it changed mid-season so it's done with now and by the time we get to the end of the year it's going to be on everybody's tip of the tongue," Ward said at the time.

Perhaps the timing was helped also by that more change awaited at the year's end anyway, as GB3 gets a technical boost for 2022. "We've got a Halo-equipped new tub, which is from Tatuus, there's a power upgrade, 250bhp [from 230bhp] and there's the aero upgrade, it's 20-25% more downforce," Palmer explains.

"Teams are excited about it, driver interest is great. GB3 is clearly in for another really good year, an even better year I'd say for next year too."

And next year GB3 gets a little brother in GB4, designed as an entry-level affordable single-seater category for talent of 15 years old and upwards. It will use the first-generation Tatuus F4-T014 chassis seen in Spanish, Italian and ADAC F4 series recently.

GB4 experienced though what appeared an underwhelming start, with not much news following its early September launch. Palmer says however this was from waiting until Motorsport UK's championship control panel – whose sitting shifted from July to October – approved the new championship. There also appeared some tension with Motorsport UK, which is also British Formula 4's new organiser.

"Let's be honest it's been a bit of a sensitive subject with them," Palmer notes of Motorsport UK. "We wanted to make sure that everyone was on the same page before we announced the calendar and pushed it forward and now we are at that point.

"Motorsport UK fully understand this now, but we very much see GB4 not as a head-on competitor with British F4, but as an alternative for those drivers that can't raise the £300,000-£400,000 that British F4's going to take.

"There's probably barely anybody in the in the world, certainly not in this country, that's got the level of experience we've got at not just running these championships but running them with a good reputation."

Now 11 teams have expressed their intent to compete in GB4 next year, ranging from existing GB3 squads to established Formula Ford outfits Kevin Mills Racing and Oldfield Motorsport.

Big technical overlap between GB3 and GB4 – 80% of the parts are the same – is also intended to create economies of scale for teams to compete in both categories simultaneously (for both, seven out of their eight race gatherings in 2022 will be at the same meetings).

"With GB4 it's very important that we give the opportunity for privateers to come back and have a go," Palmer explains. "Kids that have gone through karting, done quite well, not a wealthy dad but believes in his son, the lad's desperate to get on, and you can go and buy an existing Tatuus F4 car for £25,000 running and you could run that car on £5000 a race weekend so with eight race weekends you could do it on £40,000 or £50,000, to get into a high-quality single-seater championship.

"There are a lot of drivers out there whether it's out of karting, out of Ginetta Juniors, that would love to try and have a shot to try to become the next George Russell [or] Lewis Hamilton but trying to find £300,000 in year one is a huge amount of money and I certainly couldn't have done anything like it when I started, and my own experience plays heavily on these."

Running on British GT's calendar also gives drivers a chance to race on Silverstone's, Donington's and Brands Hatch's GP layouts plus, in GB3's case, at Spa.

"We do have a responsibility and we are just enjoying providing young drivers with very modest means the ability to learn, develop their talent, showcase their talent and help them move on to bigger and better things," Palmer adds.

"And of course most recently a great example is George Russell whose first car racing championship was with us in BRDC F4, and we all know where he is now, which is enormously satisfying. And look back on my Formula Palmer Audi days, Justin Wilson again came from a very modest means family, hugely talented driver, wonderful person, and the journey to get him to Formula 1 and ultimately IndyCars was really exciting.

"When I started in single-seater motor racing Britain was a hell of a place to come, it was *the* place to come to develop your single-seater racing career, and it's faded away from that a bit. And we've done a very good job with BRDC F4, with British F3/GB3 championship, and I think we're in for an exciting time now. We'll have GB4 championship and with British F4 and with GB3 we've got three very good championships that have got their own niches that can really help reinvigorate Britain as being a single-seater destination of choice for aspiring young drivers." ■

GB4 will use the chassis seen regularly in mainland European F4

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# RACING REPORTS

Photos: Rachel Bourne

## ANGLESEY: BRSCC RACE OF REMEMBRANCE BY GRAHAM KEILLOH — NOVEMBER 12-14

Rob Boston Racing Elise made it two wins in row

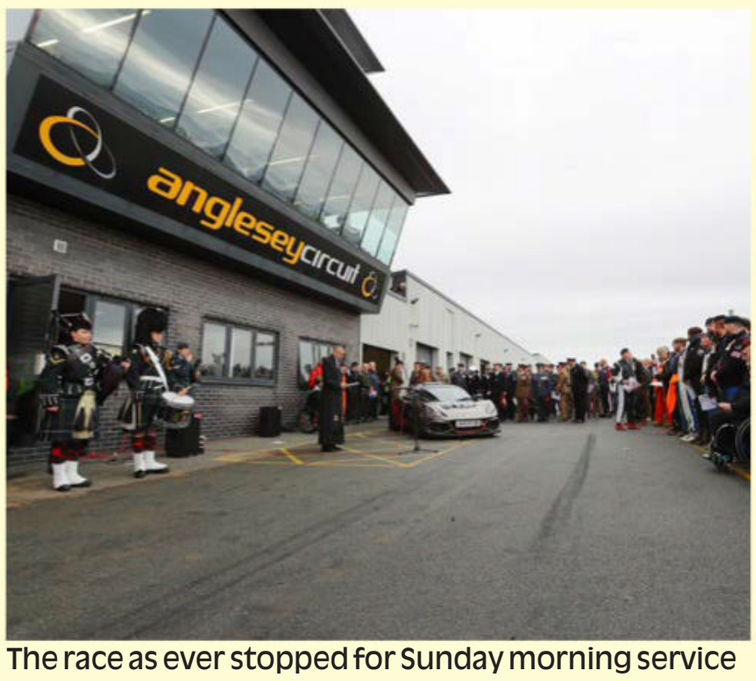
**RACE WINNERS**

**Race of Remembrance**
Peter Mansfield/Rob Boston – Rob Boston Racing (Lotus Elise S2)

**RoR Clubsport Trophy**
Luke Handley (VW Golf)

The Solo64 effort led the multi-Caterham 270R attack

# ELISE PAIR BOSTON AND MANSFIELD DOUBLE UP AFTER A SCARE




The race as ever stopped for Sunday morning service

**Rob Boston and Peter Mansfield in their Lotus Elise claimed their second Race of Remembrance win in a row, as the very special 12-hour endurance contest – held around a Remembrance Sunday service in Anglesey's pitlane – returned to the track after a year away due to Covid.**

Boston said: "We've got a good team that work behind the scenes, we had a fantastic team of lads working on the car this weekend, absolutely on point at every moment through the race, and that goes a long way, that and the preparation, and we've done it [the Race of Remembrance] a few times now so we are really starting to learn the fine [points] of what we need to do."

And for soldier Mansfield the event run by the Mission Motorsport service personnel charity is particularly significant. Adding to the poignancy this time current members of the 19th Regiment that he served in were present.

Just like in the previous Race of Remembrance two years ago, though, Boston and Mansfield's win was not straightforward despite the Rob Boston Racing effort's startling pace. The Elise this time quickly built a strong lead from pole, but come the halfway-point halt at the end of Saturday it was only 5.7 seconds clear of the first of a host of attacking Caterhams. And early in Sunday's resumption two Caterhams ran ahead for a time.

The Elise had picked up a couple of penalties on Saturday, plus during that part Boston encountered a more tangible problem of ending up head on in the wall, caught out by a momentarily long brake pedal.

"We did have some dramas," Boston conceded. "But, you know, you make your best-laid plans and as long as you just stick to those plans then generally it goes well. We were able to fix the car overnight and we were able to fight fit today." They wrested back control to win by a lap.

An immaculate run by Solo64 trio Lee Bristow, Will Rossetti and Giuseppe Felet, sharing a Caterham 270R, was rewarded with second place ahead of the fellow 270R shared by Rocket Racing's Steve McCulley, Don Henshall and Andy Perry. That car made an additional pitstop with two-and-a-half hours left as McCulley thought his wheel was falling off, though the team reckoned the delay didn't cost places.

This Race of Remembrance also had the novelty of a support race, which was a special British and Racing Sports Car Club Clubsport Trophy 45-minute contest with a mandatory pitstop. It was won by Luke Handley in his VW Golf, after poleman and first-stint leader Gary Mitchell, showcasing his Global GT Light, had a lengthy pitstop from having to refuel, as his car usually competes in shorter races.

## BRANDS HATCH: BARC BY MARK LIBBETER — NOVEMBER 13-14

# WATTS THE STORY: FATHER AND DAUGHTER CITROEN C1 TEAM ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG HAUL

Former British Touring Car Championship star Patrick Watts and daughter Aimee recorded a memorable success on Saturday as they teamed up with Orlando Lindsay and won the three-hour C1 Challenge endurance event in their Ladybird-Daddy entry.

An impressive opening stint from Lindsay helped the team lay the foundations for victory from the outset. With Aimee Watts also showing strong pace in the middle part of the race, Watts Sr was able to reel off the remaining time with relative ease and secure one of the proudest wins of his lengthy career.

Second place was taken by Alistair May and Chris Parkes for Quattro Formaggio, despite a late challenge from the JW Bird Motorsport entry of Tony Prendergast/Robin Welsh.

Josh Rowledge narrowly beat Liam McNeilly to the Ginetta Junior Winter Series title. Two wins on Saturday helped Rowledge establish an advantage, but lowly grid positions for races three and four on Sunday threatened to undo his good work. Despite a spin in race three and McNeilly inheriting the race four spoils, a fifth-place finish proved enough for Rowledge to seal the crown. Race three was won by Aqil Alibhai after race-long leader Tom Edgar was forced to retire on the final tour.

Two wins in the Super Saloons /Tin Tops double-header on Sunday meant Rod Birley reached the landmark of 700 career (outright and class) race victories. Birley took a lights-to-flag success in race one in his Ford Escort WRC, despite the close attentions of Steve Dann's VW Scirocco. Victory in the second contest came Birley's way after Nick Sutton (Mitsubishi Lancer E10) misjudged a pass during a caution period and received a post-race time penalty.

Rupert Deeth won the opening Mini Winter Challenge contest in his Miglia after closest challenger Endaf Owens retired to the pits with oil pressure problems. Scott Kendall snatched second from Colin Peacock late in the race when the latter was slowed by backmarkers at Clearways. Owens recovered to dominate races two and three.

Further back, former BTCC team-mates Andrew Jordan and Jeff Smith indulged in an entertaining battle for Se7en honours. Jordan, driving the car father Mike had raced in the main championship this year, emerged victorious each time.

Steve Rothery claimed a popular victory in the second Britcar 'Into the Night' event in his Peugeot 308 after early leaders Carl Cavers and Ian Humphris (Porsche 718 GT4 Clubsport) were hit with a pitlane infringement penalty. Humphris had already won race one in partnership with Benji Hetherington.

Photos: Gary Hawkins

Patrick Watts, Orlando Lindsay and Aimee Watts won

**RACE WINNERS**

**Britcar Trophy**
**Race 1:** Ian Humphris/Benji Hetherington (Porsche 718 GT4 Clubsport);
**Race 2:** Steve Rothery (Peugeot 308)

**C1 Challenge**
Ladybird-Daddy (Patrick Watts/Aimee Watts/Orlando Lindsay)

**Ginetta Junior Winter Series**
**Races 1 & 2:** Josh Rowledge; **Race 3:** Aqil Alibhai; **Race 4:** Liam McNeilly

**Mini Winter Challenge**
**Race 1:** Rupert Deeth (Miglia);
**Race 2 & 3:** Endaf Owens (Miglia)

**Super Saloons & Tin Tops**
**Races 1 & 2:** Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC)

**Intermarque Silhouettes**
**Race 1:** Malcolm Blackman (Vauxhall Tigra); **Race 2:** Steve Burrows (Vauxhall Tigra)

Rod Birley (right) powered to his 700th career victory with both Saloon/Tin Top wins

# WHAT'S ON

## YOUTUBE

Legend Ari Vatanen is our very special Q&A feature subject this week, and again YouTube lets us supplement his answers with video. The World Rally Championship's official channel has its own tribute, summing up Vatanen's claim to rally greatness.

This is at: youtube.com/watch?v=YoqouLSZXKU or by searching: 'WRC Legend: Ari Vatanen'.

The likes of Jari-Matti Latvala, Malcolm Wilson, plus the man himself, explain just what the allure is about the Colin McRae-esque Vatanen, and it's interspersed with evocative Group B footage. Then the feature focuses on Vatanen's stunning comeback victory in the Peugeot 205 T16 over Walter Rohrl's Audi quattro on 1985's snowy Monte Carlo Rally. Vatanen was aided by an inspired tyre choice, and of course by his own stunning commitment.

And for a bit more Vatanen detail we again can lean on the VHS Rallies channel, where in 1988 prior to his RAC Rally comeback he is interviewed for 10 minutes by future turquoise shell suit wearer David Icke.

Vatanen talks in depth about his 1985 Rally Argentina accident, in particular its impact on him mentally, and his recovery as a man and rally driver. This is at: youtube.com/watch?v=Ygz-FgTdKJw or by you can search for: '1988 Ari Vatanen Interview'.

**Graham Keilloh**

Vatanen's Monte victory was stunning

## LISTINGS

**SATURDAY-SUNDAY**

**Brands Hatch, Kent**

**MSVR meeting:** EnduroKa, Trackday Championship, Trackday Trophy, SuperCup, FF1600 **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1115hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1005hrs **Admission** adult £14, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

## TV GUIDE

Part three of Formula 1's triple header is this weekend, at a new venue for F1 in Qatar. Sky Sports F1 kicks off as usual with The F1 Show at 1500hrs-1600hrs today, followed by the drivers' press conference.

Ted Krvaitz's notebooks are still here too, with his qualifying muse at 1700hrs-1730hrs on Saturday and his race version at the same time on Sunday. Both get repeated. Channel 4's highlights meanwhile are 1730hrs-1900hrs on Saturday for qualifying and 1830hrs-2100hrs on Sunday for the race.

The World Rally Championship reaches its finale this weekend at Monza, with Elfyn Evans seeking a last-gasp title grab from Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier. As well as the live coverage, there's a roundup on Monday at 2000hrs-2100hrs on BT Sport 2.

The European Rally Championship also has it season closer this weekend, Rally Islas Canarias, and Friday's best is on Eurosport 1 at 2100hrs-2135hrs while the whole thing gets reviewed at 2100hrs-2130hrs on the same channel on Saturday. That's also repeated over the coming days.

There also are chances to watch the best of the British Rallycross Championship's recent Lydden Hill visit today at 0800hrs-0900hrs on BT Sport 3, 1300hrs on BT Sport 1 and 2130hrs on BT Sport 2.

Will Evans be able to claim the World title?

## LIVE TV

**FORMULA 1 QATAR GRAND PRIX LOSAIL INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT**

**Practice 1:** Friday, 1000hrs-1145hrs, Sky Sports F1
**Practice 2:** Friday, 1345hrs-1530hrs, Sky Sports F1
**Practice 3:** Saturday, 1045hrs-1210hrs, Sky Sports F1
**Qualifying:** Saturday, 1300hrs-1545hrs, Sky Sports F1
**Race:** Sunday, 1230hrs-1700hrs (start time 1400hrs), Sky Sports F1

**LIVE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP RALLY MONZA**

**SS4:** Friday, 1000hrs-1100hrs, BT Sport 2
**SS8:** Saturday, 0630hrs-0730hrs, BT Sport 1
**SS15:** Sunday, 0900hrs-1000hrs, BT Sport 3
**SS16/Powerstage:** Sunday, 1100hrs-1230hrs, BT Sport 3

**FERRARI CHALLENGE EUROPE MUGELLO**

**Race:** Sunday, 1020hrs-1120hrs, Sky Sports F1

**V8 SUPERCARS SYDNEY MOTORSPORT PARK**

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**Race 2 :** Sunday, 0400hrs-0600hrs, BT Sport 1

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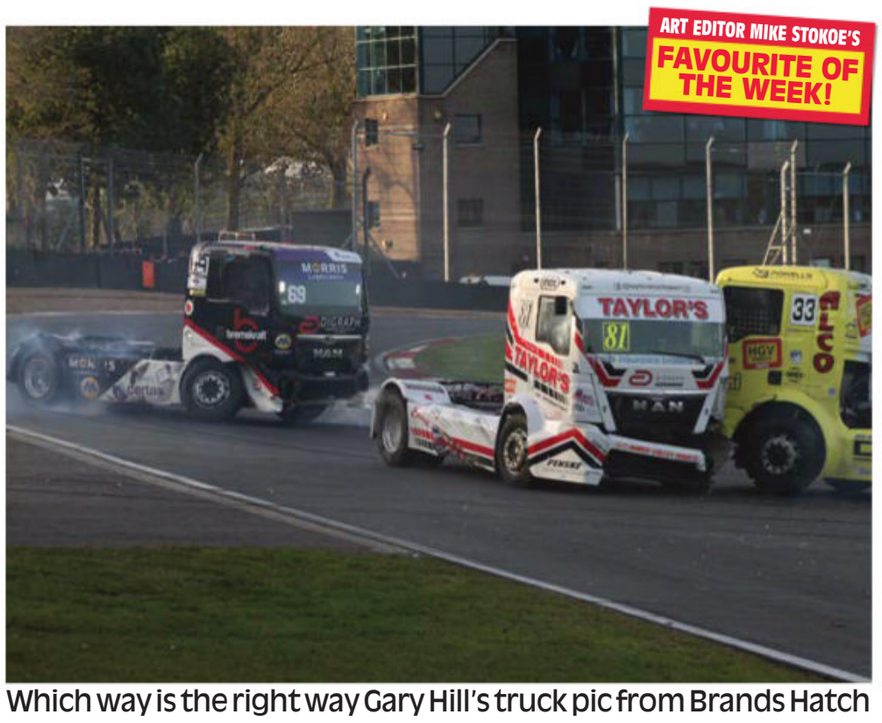
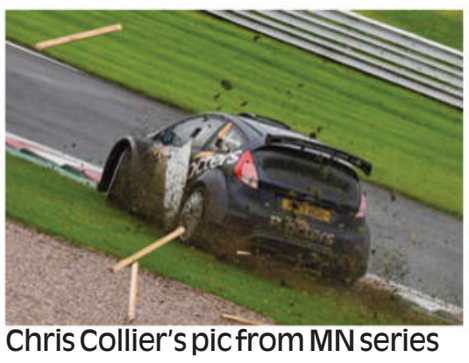


Which way is the right way Gary Hill's truck pic from Brands Hatch



Chris Collier's pic from MN series

Rally run, from Richard Salisbury

Chris Pratchett's pic of Volvo woe

Graham Lomax from Oulton Park

## NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25

*Correct at time of going to press

**READERS' Q&A: ROBERTO MORENO**

*The Brazilian legend tackles the MN readers' posers*

**SPECIAL! BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP 2021 REVIEW**

*Find out who is the drivers' driver of the year*

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